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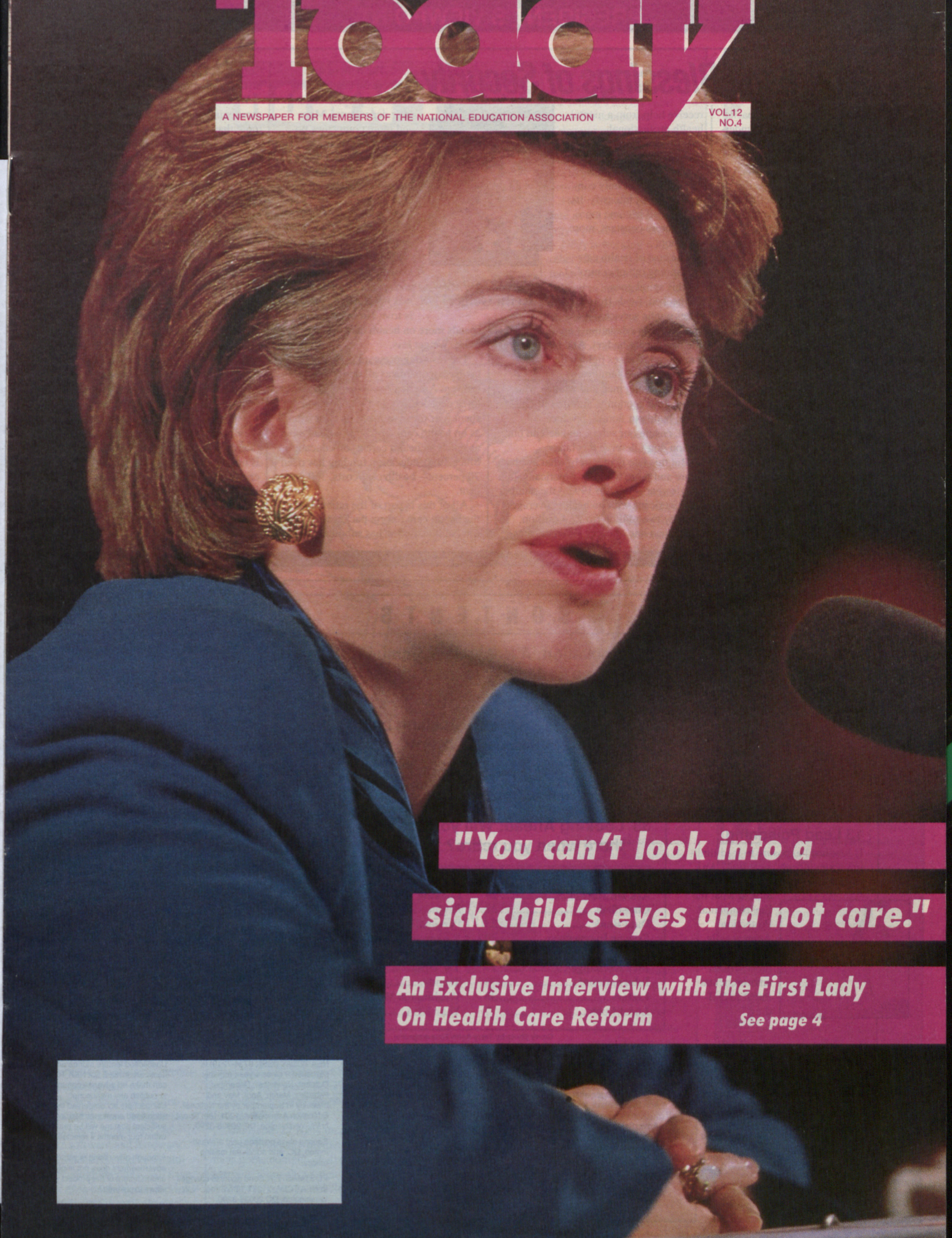

"You can't look into a sick child's eyes and not care."

An Exclusive Interview with the First Lady On Health Care Reform

See page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

To Secure the Blessings of Security

NEA President
Keith Geiger

America's health care crisis packs a powerful punch. No one understands this better than school employees.

This crisis hits us in our wallets and hits us in our hearts. It diminishes the security of our families and throttles the potential of our students. It robs schools of resources and children of hope. It's a menace to each of us today—and a menace to the America of tomorrow.

At present, the guarantee of quality health care is a privilege, not a right. And increasingly, it's a privilege reserved only for the privileged.

For most of us, quality health care is a fragile possession. And for millions of our students, it's a possession they have never known.

Every day we see students who will suffer forever from the inadequate prenatal care their mothers received. We see students driven to despair because a parent suddenly struggles with a life-threatening condition that would never have become life threatening if only a yearly visit to a doctor had been affordable.

We see visually impaired students who don't own eyeglasses and emotionally impaired students who will never receive help from a mental health professional.

Without sweeping reform of this country's health care system, this tragedy will not only continue—it will intensify. Its impact will become more cruel, more constant, more common.

The cost of health care is spinning out of control. As this spiral goes unchecked, funds from other public services—most notably education—are diverted to the health care budget. And insurance premium increases tighten the squeeze on middle class families.

The working men and women who sustain our economy, nurture our children, build our homes, produce our food, ensure our safety, and defend our nation don't deserve this fate.

But this fate is precisely what awaits more and more working Americans. In a single year—1991 to 1992—the number of Americans with no health coverage rose by two million (to 37.4 million, more than one of every seven citizens).

The bulk of this increase came among the employed—and their dependents. More and more companies no longer cover their employees' dependents. Others demand increased co-payments for dependents, creating an economic squeeze that forces many employees to forfeit family coverage.

All of this might be understandable if American spending on health was miserly. The opposite is true: No other nation spends more on health care. We pay more. We get less.

The resulting pressure on our nation's tax base jeopardizes all our efforts to reinvent America's schools. A little over three decades ago, in 1960, government spent four times as much on education as on health care. Today, we spend twice as much on health care as on education. Since 1980, education funding has risen 70 percent—health care costs, 350 percent.

All of this is part of the rationale for the health care reform package the Clinton Administration has submitted to Congress. This initiative offers us an historic opportunity.

We have the chance to help shape the most enlightened social legislation in more than 50 years.

We have the chance to secure the blessings of security for ourselves and for posterity.

We are determined to seize this opportunity. We will make our voices heard. We will work to protect those parts of the Clinton plan that signal steadfast commitment to prenatal services, well-baby care, and preventive medicine for all American children—including the 25 percent who live in poverty.

And we will work to strengthen those parts of the plan that pave the way to a single-payer system.

Our goals are straightforward. We want universal access. We want quality assurance. And we want cost containment.

The trend of skyrocketing costs and plummeting coverage must not continue. Our determination to reverse this trend is nothing less than a determination to create an America in which workers know justice, families know security, and children know hope.

The battle has been joined. Now it's time for us to join the battle.

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Cover photo by Terry Ashe/*Time* magazine

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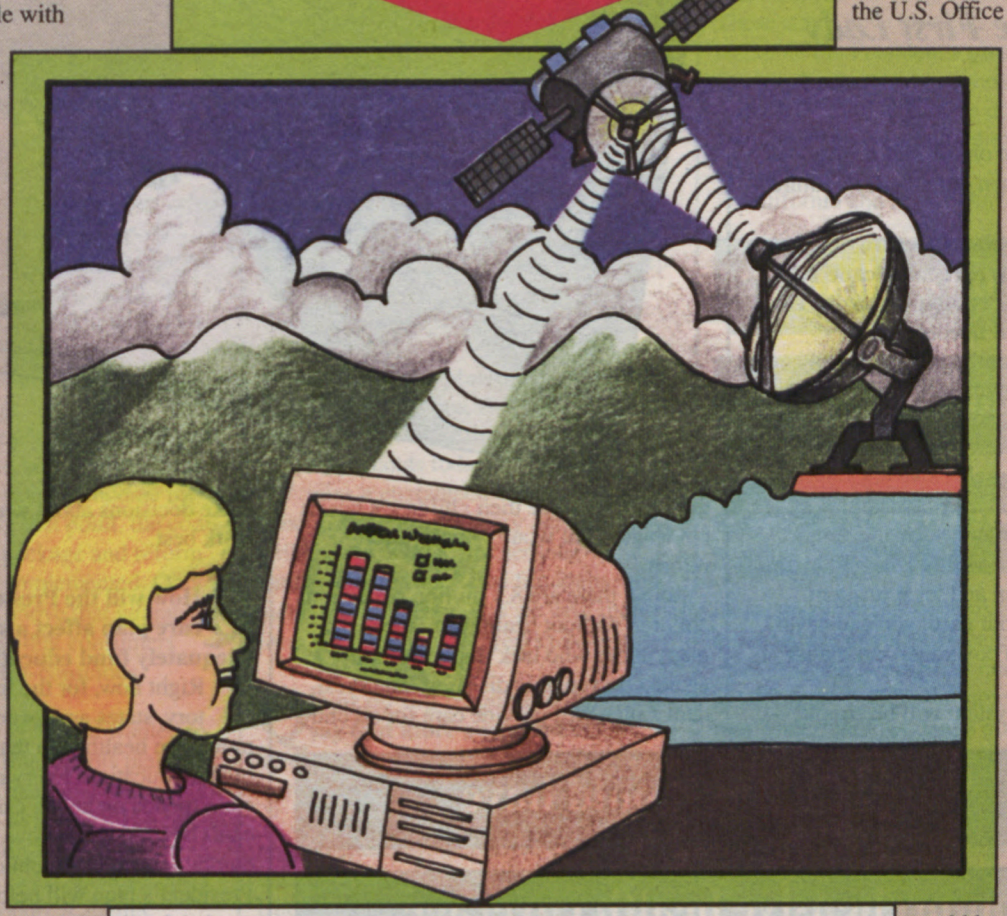
NATIONAL NEWS

DOWN THE ELECTRONIC SUPER HIGHWAY



The groundwork's being laid for a new electronic system that will carry most of the country's communications. Will schools be part of the grand design?

The nation's information superhighway is under construction. We're not that far from a new electronic network that will have the capacity to carry the entire country's video, voice, and data—from home to school, school to school, home to office. And all this could happen in 10 years.

It could happen, but there are some major questions still to be answered. Such as:

➤ How will all this information be transmitted—phone lines, fiber optics, coaxial cable?

➤ What kind of highway will it be? A freeway like Internet, which people with modems and computers can access for a flat fee? Or a toll road, where people pay a set toll for basic services and then extra for each additional service?

➤ Will the highway be entertainment driven, offering viewers 500 channels—movies, sports, games, banking, shopping, and more—to choose from?

➤ Who will bankroll the highway's construction? Corporations could, but how would usage fees be set? And who would regulate a privately constructed system? The federal government could, but should a country already running a trillion dollar deficit take on the expense?

➤ Closer to home, where do the nation's public schools fit into the highway? Will all schools be hooked together? To what end? How about international connections?

These are tough questions without easy solutions, but the uncertainties aren't stopping big business from positioning itself for whatever kind of information highway is eventually constructed.

The key business players—cable companies, publishers, telephone companies, computer software and hardware manufacturers, and entertainment conglomerates—all have their eyes on the prize: a prime location on the nation's electronic superhighway.

Megabuck deals are in the works. The latest: Bell Atlantic's $30 billion merger with one of the nation's largest cable televison companies, Telecommunications, Inc.

Most analysts expect more of these deals as companies vie to get a piece of the action.

How well will education fare as the new superhighway's plans are drawn?

NEA is working with other education groups to make sure schools are considered in any plan.

NEA has a representative on a committee of education organizations working with the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy and is working with several educational technology groups as well.

On the hill, NEA lobbyists are watching and trying to influence the content of several bills that have school components built in.

Three pieces of legislation were moving through Congress as *NEA Today* went to press. All could have implications for education in the development of the information infrastructure. The bills include Senator Ernest Hollings' S. 4; Representative Tim Valentine's H.R. 820, and Representative Rick Boucher's H.R. 1757.

All three include language dealing with high speed networking in education, education software development, and manufacturing. H.R. 820 and 1757 have both passed the House; S. 4 was set for Senate action as this issue went to press. Other infrastructure bills are currently in the works.

"There are bound to be some changes in these bills," says NEA staff lobbyist Carolyn Breedlove. "There'll probably be some compromises. The key is to make sure the schools don't get shortchanged."

ON THE ENTRY RAMP

nea online

Electronic networks, once an exotic oddity of the computer age, have become more and more commonplace all across the United States. But access to these networks only comes at a price — and usually a stiff one.

For NEA members, that's all changing. Earlier this fall, a new electronic network developed just for NEA members went "online." This new NEA Online network offers any NEA member with a computer and a modem — a device that links computers through the phone lines — network access for as little as $5.95 a month.

Thousands of NEA members are already using NEA Online to share insights with their colleagues, "downloading" into their home computers all sorts of useful information, and learning more about their Association.

Want to know more? See page 18.

HEROES & ZEROES

Wide World

Good Guy Awards to the good Doctors C. Everett Koop, left, and T. Berry Brazelton. Sitting on either side of the First Lady while President Clinton delivered his health care address, the two well-known pediatricians have long been in favor of two key aspects of the Clinton plan—universal access to health care and preventive care for children. Koop, who will lead a series of meetings for doctors on the Administration's plan, told the *Washington Post* that Clinton had "accomplished more in health care reform in the past four months than all of his living predecessors put together."

The Mark Twain Rumors-of-My-Death-Award goes to ultra-conservative scholar Myron Lieberman for his newest book *Public Education: An Autopsy.* "To be sure," he writes, "an autopsy implies that the subject is dead, and I intend that implication. What has died is the rationale for public education." The book suggests that only "for-profit schools" and the competitive environment they inspire can save public education. For this, he wants you to put $27.95 toward his personal profits.

A Hands-Across-the-Aisle Award to Colorado Governor Roy Romer and the Colorado state legislature for vaulting over the usual partisan gridlock to deal with the tough issue of juvenile violence. In a special session, the lawmakers mandated a minimum five-day jail sentence for anyone under 18 found with a handgun. Here's hoping they'll also address the issues of intervention and prevention.

For dragging the image of the teaching profession to depths previously unimagined—an Idiot Box Emmy to the USA Network for its made-for-TV-movie, "The Substitute." Here's the plot: The teacher finds out her husband is having an affair with one of her students. She kills both of them, has her own affairs with a student *and* his dad—then kills again to avoid being discovered. What a gal! If, as USA notes in its promo, "Murder is spelled T-E-A-C-H-E-R," then, in this case, trash is spelled U-S-A N-E-T-W-O-R-K.

Hillary Rodham Clinton On Health Care Reform

Terry Ashe/Time

As details blur and controversy swirls around the President's health care package, the First Lady cuts to the heart of the issue.

In the weeks since the President announced the provisions of his Administration's plan for national health care reform, there's been a frenzied cry for more details—from the media, from Congress, from interest groups on all sides of the issue, and from the public.

Amid the chaos, Hillary Rodham Clinton has personified composure.

As the leader of the Clinton Administration's health care reform task force, Hillary Clinton has been handed one of the toughest, most complex social problems of our time. A year's worth of listening, thousands of pages of details, dozens of appearances every day—and she's still in control, quietly attempting to build her case for change.

NEA members want change, too. NEA shares Hillary Clinton's zeal for health care reform solutions that cover everyone, provide top quality health care, and keep a lid on skyrocketing costs.

Like most Americans, NEA members have a lot of questions about how the Administration's plan will reach those goals. Here are a few answers from the First Lady herself.

Q The health care issue promises to be a bruising fight. What made you want to get in the middle of it?

A When the President asked me to chair the Health Care Task Force, I had no doubt the health care issue was critical to all of us. Traveling with my husband during the presidential campaign, we listened to story after story of families who had lost their insurance—often because someone in the family lost their job or one of their children got sick.

During our years in Arkansas, we worked to provide better health care to people living in rural areas and to ensure that all children were provided the preventive care they need. As someone who has worked for years on behalf of children's needs, I believe every child should have comprehensive health coverage and free preventive care.

When the President offered me the opportunity to become involved in health care, I saw it as a personal privilege and national opportunity to help every individual American obtain real health security and strengthen our country's future.

Q Can you paint a picture of America's health care landscape 10 years after the President's health care reform proposal becomes law?

A The President's proposal will keep what's right and fix what's wrong with our health care system. And you'll see three big differences. First, everyone will have a comprehensive package of benefits that can never be taken away. This will be guaranteed by the health security card that will be given to every American citizen and legal resident. Once you get your card, you can never lose your health coverage—no matter what.

Second, the system will be simpler—without the numerous forms every time you go to the doctor. And third, you'll have more choices as to how and where you get your care because you—not your employer or the government—will choose your health plan. Your choices will include a traditional fee-for-service plan, a network of doctors and hospitals, or an HMO. Your employer or insurance agent won't be able to decide where or from whom you get your care—you will. And like today, almost all of us will sign up for a health plan where we work.

Q How will the President's health care plan benefit kids?

A When everybody is covered, children will be able to get the preventive services they need to stay healthy—at no charge to their parents. And parents will be relieved from the pressure of worrying that if one day they lose their job, they will also lose their children's health coverage. That won't happen after reform.

Today there are 8.3 million American children without health insurance, and many more who lack immunization against preventable diseases. The President's plan will provide care for all children through regular check-ups, essential immunizations, and other preventive services. This will help keep children healthy and save everybody money in the long run.

> "Every child should have comprehensive health coverage and free preventive care."

Q Will the President's plan encourage more school-based health clinics?

A School-based clinics have proved effective. The President's plan will build on existing school-based or school-linked clinic demonstrations and will aim to establish several thousand new health care clinics sponsored by schools, community health care clinics, and social service organizations.

The President's plan will build on educational programs that have proven effective in reducing teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and truancy—and will enable local communities and parents to make decisions about what approaches work best.

Q How will the President's health care plan affect a state's ability to adequately fund education?

A Right now, for the first time in history, states are spending more money on health care than they do on higher education. Every dollar that your state spends on health care is a dollar that can't be used to improve classrooms, add computers, and help children learn. The President's plan will help states provide needed funding for education by reducing the financial burden of health care.

By creating large pools of buyers, reducing current waste in the system, and slowing the rate of growth of our nation's Medicare and Medicaid bills, states will be better able to direct funds toward education.

And evidence shows that greater purchasing power on a local level will save money. A Florida school district that joined a purchasing alliance used its bargaining power to obtain a discount from a regional hospital, which ultimately enabled it to save enough money to keep 20 teaching jobs.

Q How will it affect the average American's bank statement?

A For the average American, health care costs will remain the same or less than they would have been without reform. Our estimates show that 63 percent of Americans will pay the same or less for the same or better benefits.

But some people will have to pay more. In general, these are the ones who are without coverage now—the ones who, when they end up in the emergency

COVER STORY

"The President's proposal will keep what's right and fix what's wrong with our health care system."

room now, pass those costs on to the rest of us. These often include young, single adults who are in the best of health and don't see any reason to buy health insurance until it's too late, after they've become sick or had an accident.

Q Why are you proposing that Americans pay taxes on health care benefits they've won—usually after significant sacrifice?

A We're not. In fact, the President's proposal is very different from other Democratic and Republican proposals that would result in an immediate tax on millions of Americans. First of all, the President believes that people who have fought hard and sacrificed wage increases for good benefits should not have to give them up.

Under the President's proposal all benefits that people have now will continue to be treated as non-taxable income for the next 10 years. By that point, the comprehensive benefits package and reform will have been fully implemented. Only then would benefits above that guaranteed level be taxed so that consumers would make more cost-conscious decisions.

The last thing the President wanted to do was look first to finance this plan by taxing millions of American families before even looking to savings. Instead, the plan includes a tobacco tax to encourage good health, and a tax on large corporations to help support academic health centers and medical research.

Q What kind of provisions are included for preventive care?

A Preventive care is one of the cornerstones of the President's plan. No matter what health plan you join, you will get screenings, lab tests, and periodic check-ups, including physicals and mammograms, as part of your insurance coverage for a small co-payment. And the reform proposal specifies that certain preventive services are to be offered free of charge. Today these services are rarely ever covered by private insurance plans, let alone offered free. Through these kind of preventive measures, we hope to keep people healthy and save money for everybody in the long run.

Q Clearly this plan doesn't include everything you'd like it to. What's been left for the future?

A As it stands today, the proposal contains a guaranteed comprehensive benefits package for every American. We will look to include greater long-term care benefits, dental care for adults, and mental health benefits as we save money from the system in the years to come.

Q How do you respond to those who say that more government involvement in health care will create bureaucracy, inefficiency, and waste?

A It would be difficult to create more bureaucracy, inefficiency, and waste than we have in the current system. Under our proposal, the federal government will set standards and then get out of the way. Today, hundreds of forms confront doctors, nurses, and consumers at every turn. Doctors are constantly looking over their shoulders and are spending less time treating patients.

After reform, there will be less regulation of doctors, nurses, and hospitals—freeing them to spend more time taking care of patients. The President's plan will create a single claims form and a health security card—leading the way to electronic billing, a streamlined system, and less paperwork and waste.

Q What states are ahead of the health reform game?

A Hawaii, Washington, Vermont, California, Minnesota, and Florida have made substantial progress toward reform. These states have elements of reform that resemble the President's plan. Hawaii led the way by providing universal coverage since 1974, and held costs down while keeping its residents among the healthiest in the nation.

California and Florida have shown in their current health systems that group alliances are effective in bargaining with providers and getting low rates. But the most important thing to remember is that, under the President's plan, each state will have flexibility to shape health reform to fit its needs.

Q Where will the strongest opposition to the plan come from?

A Opposition will come from two sources: those who are profiting from the current system or not paying their fair share now and those who honestly worry about changes and need more information. We expect those in the first category will exert heavy pressure on members of Congress.

And we hope that the members of the NEA will counter that pressure by pushing for national health care reform and helping us educate all Americans about the unacceptable costs of failing to change now.

Q How can NEA members help in getting health care legislation through Congress?

A You can talk to fellow teachers and members of your communities about the need for reform. In addition, you might organize community meetings or house parties where people can freely discuss their concerns about reform. You should also write to and call your representatives in the House and Senate about the importance of acting on this critical issue.

"People who fought hard and sacrificed wage increases for good benefits should not have to give them up."

For More Information...

NEA Today will provide continuous coverage of the Congressional battle to pass health care reform legislation. In addition, NEA members can get up-to-the-minute information from America Online. Look in the Political Action Message Board in the NEA Legislation and Political Arena. To get involved locally, contact your local or state Association.

What's in It for Your Students

Right now, 8.3 million American children have no health insurance. Under the proposed Clinton health plan:

➤All children will have guaranteed health insurance, no matter if their mother gets laid off, or their father changes jobs, or their guardian goes back to school—no matter what.

➤All expectant mothers will have access to prenatal and well-baby care.

➤All children will have access to free immunizations.

➤All children will have access to preventive medical care, including regular well-baby and child exams.

➤More children will be able to see the blackboard, since eye exams and eyeglasses will be covered until age 18.

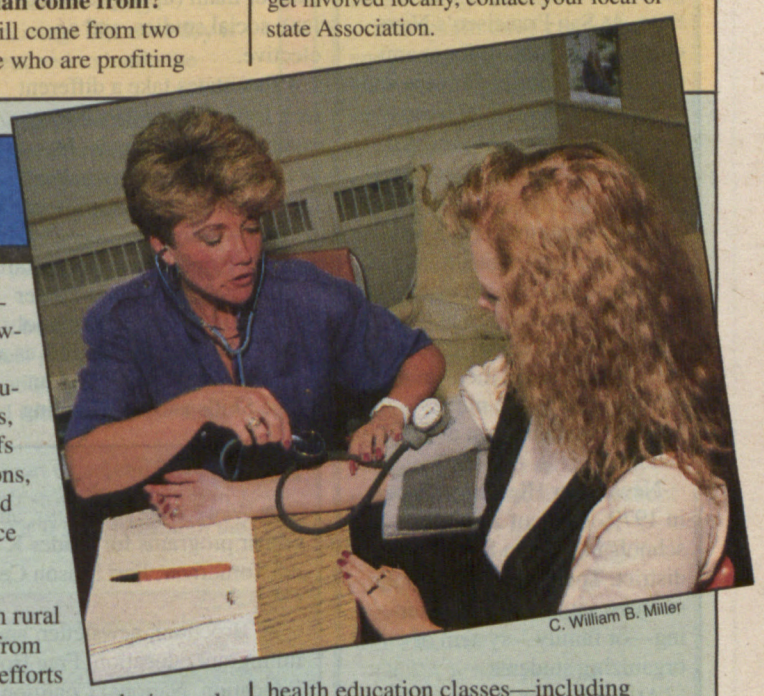
➤All children under 18 will have access to regular, preventive dental care.

➤All children will have access to the medicine they need, since the Clinton plan calls for an outpatient prescription drug benefit for all Americans.

➤All children will have mental health coverage, including treatment for drug and alcohol abuse.

➤All teens will have access to family planning. Those who get pregnant will have options; no teen will be forced to bear a child simply because she can't afford an abortion.

➤More children will have access to the convenience of school-based health clinics that provide comprehensive care. The Clinton plan calls for grants to states to expand the number of clinics in low-income areas, link clinics with community health services, and train their staffs about immunizations, teen pregnancy, and methods of violence prevention.



C. William B. Miller

➤All children in rural areas will benefit from the Clinton plan's efforts to establish health care networks in rural communities, provide incentives for doctors to practice in rural areas, and develop "academic health centers" to support rural health education programs.

➤All children will have aceess to health education classes—including stress management and nutritional counseling—covered by their health insurance plan. Federal grants may support classes, like sex education or drug and alcohol education, that aim to reduce high-risk behavior among adolescents.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Welcome, Newcomers

Lou Dematteis

San Francisco's Newcomer High School program and others like it are designed to help immigrant students get their school careers off to a good start.

For some, it's a safe haven, for others a temporary stopover, a shock absorber on the way to learning American life and language. We're talking about newcomer schools.

These self-contained programs—housed either by themselves or within the mainstream school where they're located—help immigrant students learn English and basic academic skills and, at the same time, ease them into American ways and mainstream education.

Students stay in these programs for varying periods of time. At San Francisco's Newcomer High School, for example, the 550 mostly Chinese and Hispanic students stay from five months to a year.

"We enroll the kids as they arrive in the city and register for public education," says Newcomer curriculum facilitator Lourdes Lu, who also teaches newcomer orientation in Chinese. "We don't even have to wait until they get their immunization shots. The nurse adminsters them right at school."

Newcomer High, established in 1979, is one of 20 high schools in the San Francisco district. The key to the school's success, says Lu, is a clustering—or family—system of organizing students.

At Newcomer High, new arrivals take a five-month orientation course. In Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, or various levels of English, they learn about the school system, city, state, and country. Those who have completed newcomer orientation take "the modern world" as their social studies course.

Newcomer High teacher Lourdes Lu works with a small group of kids from El Salvador and China. The San Francisco program, set up in 1979, is the country's oldest.

Every day, all students take three hours of ESL, plus courses in their native tongues: one hour each of math (up to pre-calculus), social studies, and an elective.

Other states take a different tack from California's Newcomer High. In Illinois, for example, state laws mandate that programs mainstream newcomers within three years. Teacher Pamela Forbes, on staff at the state's model newcomer program at Elgin High School since 1980, teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) Language Skills and ESL reading and writing.

"When I first came on board, the newcomer program was just starting," says Forbes. Today, she uses English to teach vocabulary, reading, and writing in social studies, science, employment, and even leisure activities. That last category includes learning about American sports and hobbies, how to read TV listings in a newspaper, and even how to use supermarket coupons.

In Elgin, basic academic classes include more than the standard curriculum. In social studies, for example, the kids learn how to deal with discrimination and how to use public transportation.

Maryland has a variety of newcomer programs. The ones at William Wirt Middle School and Bladensburg High School have a single purpose: to stop losing students who slip behind in ESL classes.

From all reports, the programs in Illinois, California, and Maryland work, though they're organized differently. More than once, notes Newcomer High's Lourdes Lu, "students who've left our school come back later to talk about their new job or how they're doing in higher education. That tells me the program is working."

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

Resources

➤ *Newcomer Programs*, an evaluation of California's newcomer programs for grades K-12. Send $12 (inc. p.h) to California Tomorrow, Fort Mason Center, Building B, San Francisco, CA 94123.

➤ Brochure, newsletter, and annotated bibliographies on immigrant education. Free from Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 100 Boylston St., Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116-4610, 800/441-7192.

➤ Newsletter and list of publications on bilingual education. Free from National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1118 22nd St., N. W., Washington, DC 20037, 800/321-6223.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Person To Watch

Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL) is leading the congressional charge to force the televison industry to reduce TV violence. He's also a sponsor of the new Rural Schools of America Act, which would provide $1.5 billion to help rural schools meet the national education goals.

Best Win For Education Employees

The U.S. House of Representatives has adopted the President's GOALS 2000 initiative, which is designed to help America meet the six National Education Goals established by the nation's governors several years ago. The initiative will help set high standards for students, then provide assistance to local schools to help students meet those standards. The Senate has yet to act on the bill.

One To Watch

A setback for safe schools: Despite heavy lobbying from NEA, Congressional appropriators decided to stop all funding for the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act. Translation—there's no more federal money to help needy schools clean up asbestos hazards. Last year, $30 million didn't go far enough.

And What You Can Do

Do something that helps you, your students, education, and the economy. Write to your representatives to urge them to pass a health care reform package that ensures universal access, quality care, and cost control and moves us toward a national, single-payer system. Address mail to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, or the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

Political Cartoon of the Month

Dan Wasserman/Boston Globe

Congressional Quote of the Month

"Education might not always end poverty and despair, but it is easily the surest route."

—Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT)

Local Look

RHODE ISLAND
Striking Combination

An unusual combination of media coverage and mediation recently helped end an eight-day strike by members of NEA Portsmouth.

The strike—in part over non-monetary issues including class size and holding public job fairs—was halted by a court order. The judge also ordered bargaining to resume, and eventually, both sides accepted the mediator's recommendations.

Reporters were allowed in the mediating sessions each day, resulting in what local leaders say were fair press accounts of the dispute.

"But the biggest asset was the inner strength of our membership," says NEA Portsmouth President Mike O'Hara. "The school committee tried to divide the union but instead found out how strong we were."

SOUTH CAROLINA
Free Time

Six South Carolina locals have teamed up with corporate sponsors to create a homework hotline for students in the Richland and Lexington school districts. The hotline is run out of the SCEA building in Columbia. Each local sends two teachers a week; several other teachers are "on call" if a student has a particularly specialized question.

"I'm very excited about this," says Catherine Flitter, president of the Brookland-Cayce Education Association. "Many students won't stay after school for help. And with so many working parents and single-parent families, there's less time to devote to supporting homework. But kids feel comfortable picking up the phone."

An eye care chain pays $15,000 (half the cost) to air 60-second radio spots 10 times a week through the school year. A local radio station donates the other half of the time to SCEA, which offers homework tips and advertises the hotline.

WASHINGTON
Cutting Edge

Faced with potential budget reductions, Seattle Education Association members have gained some innovative control over the education purse strings.

SEA's recently ratified three-year contract establishes "authentic participation" in the budget process. Specifically, if two statewide tax limitations on the November ballot pass, and the state decides to cut education, then the school district must consult with the Association to decide what will happen.

SEA also won some control over the allocation of money raised by special levies and the planning of staff development days. What's more, a new policy was agreed upon that better protects students and teachers from school violence. SEA also bargained an increase for substitute teachers, boosting their pay up to $110 per day.

"It's a great contract," says SEA President Bruce Colwell—"especially during tough economic times."

IN MICHIGAN

Robert Chase

Members of the Pinckney School Bus Drivers Association are standing firm against the school board's plan to privatize bus service. Local leaders are, from left: Caroll Sypniewski, Carol Stevenson, Jeannie Douglas, Pat Butterfield, and Karen Meloche.

Tough Route for Pinckney Drivers

What a year it's been for the 29 members of the Pinckney School Bus Drivers Association. Since last December they've been fighting off a school board bent on privatizing the 3,500-student district's bus service. And the end still isn't in sight.

The school board began its assault on SBDA members by announcing its intention to scrap its contract with the Association with just 60 days' notice. Association members responded by filing a grievance and preparing an extensive bargaining proposal.

But the board refused to consider the SBDA plan or even to discuss its privatization scheme. In fact, MEA Uniserv Director Caroll Sypniewski had to file a request under the Freedom of Information Act to get details about the board plan.

This summer, the Association won a restraining order preventing the school board from pursuing privatization until the Michigan Employment Relations Commission rules on whether the drivers' contract is still in effect.

But the legal wrangles don't tell the whole story. The Pinckney drivers are an important part of their school community—they award scholarships, contribute to the senior graduation party, and star in a bus safety video that's used as a model for safety programs statewide.

So their community is standing behind them. SBDA President Carol Stevenson reports that more than 1,500 residents signed petitions supporting the drivers.

Between 150 and 300 people show up at each board meeting to ask the board members questions on the privatization issue, which they refuse to answer.

At one particularly contentious meeting, a board member threatened to engage a resident in a fist fight. Residents now bring their own video cameras to record the meetings and have mounted a recall campaign against the board.

A final twist: this fall, the board fired the district superintendent for not doing enough—toward privatizing. The next day it fired the law firm it retained to battle the Association.

Why's the school board so recalcitrant? Four of its seven members were backed by the Livingston County Taxpayers Association, which wants to hack the school budget at all costs. Once elected, says Sypniewski, "The board members found there was no fat to cut."

This has produced a board that "comes to the table with one issue: privatizing," she adds. "That's not negotiating."

Local members feel more is at stake than their own well-being.

"This could be the start of a trend," says Stevenson. "If we can't stop privatization in Pinckney," she notes, "it'll sweep through the state."

MARYLAND
Special Alert

Members of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County can handle change, but they don't like chaos—and that's what they fear is coming.

Baltimore County Superintendent Stuart Berger has moved special education students into regular classrooms without providing adequate training, materials, and support staff for the regular and special students and their teachers. As a result, some teachers with special education students have had less than two hours of training. "To call that training is a hoax," says TABCO President Raymond Suarez, "and the victims are the children."

Some 1,500 TABCO members joined county parents at a rally protesting Berger's actions. At press time, TABCO was making its case before the state board of education. In the meantime, an ombudsman has been appointed to address parents' and teachers' concerns.

OKLAHOMA
New Image

When an anti-union group called Citizens for Better Government took control of a Shawnee school board and hired a superintendent in its own image, members of a once laid-back local got active.

The result: three candidates endorsed by the Gordon Cooper Education Association now sit on the board.

"We never had to be politically active before," says GCAE President Bonnie Hammock. "But then we got sick of having a superintendent who tries to fire people, who's violated the open meeting law, who wouldn't consult with the Association."

Members staffed phone banks, sent postcards to voters, and posted signs. Last year the Association endorsed a candidate who defeated an incumbent board member. In the most recent campaign, GCEA sponsored an open forum and endorsed two candidates who won election.

GCEA is now pushing to make sure Superintendent Bob Patton's contract isn't renewed. Patton once told a teacher that if he's unhappy, he should find another job. He did: he's now one of the GCEA-endorsed members of the school board.

State Side

GEORGIA
Grim Shot

All of Georgia was stunned when one Atlanta student shot and killed another during the first week of school.

Governor Zell Miller immediately proposed spending $10 million on school metal detectors and monitoring devices, part of a six-point plan for safer schools to be funded by the state's four-month-old lottery.

The Georgia Association of Educators applauds Miller's idea. But "we would like to see more money spent addressing the underlying causes of violent behavior in schools," says GAE President Carolyn Hart.

Miller will present his plan to the state legislature in January.

ALASKA
Balk to the Future

Alaska 2000, a statewide campaign for improving education, includes legislation giving teachers research and development grants. But there's a catch.

The grants are packaged in an omnibus bill that calls for charter schools, a longer school year, watered-down tenure protections, and a mandatory advisory school board for every school—with no provisions for funding.

"State officials have lost touch with communities and their educators," says NEA-Alaska President Claudia Douglas. "We're more concerned with issues such as early childhood education, class size, and the disparity in the technology available to each school.

"We wonder how some of the proposals can be called reforms," she adds. "We'll be working hard against them."

VIRGINIA
Hearing the Pleas

Last winter, the Virginia Education Association joined with six other education groups in calling for stronger measures to curb school violence.

Evidently, some state legislators were listening. They have passed measures that will impose stiffer penalties for juvenile weapons violations and fund remediation programs, all in an effort to "make Virginia schools a safer place to be," says VEA President Rob Jones.

Juveniles who possess handguns, with a few strict exceptions, will now be charged with a misdemeanor. And schools may now exclude students who have been expelled in other districts. Lawmakers also funded four regional pilot programs to provide expelled students with alternative education.

STAYING COMPETITIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Math, Science Training Falls Short

As the U.S. competes in a world increasingly driven by science and technology, potential teachers in these fields—science and math graduates—are often lured away. The average starting salary for teachers (in 1991) was $21,542; those entering careers in mathematics earned $29,244; chemistry, $29,700; computer science, $30,924. As a result, many who teach math and science have credentials in other fields.

States receive federal funding to provide further training and education to all math and science teachers. But full funding would require twice the current investment.

State	FY 1992 Actual (in thousands)	FY 1993 Estimate	FY 1994 Full-Funding Estimate
Alabama	$4,488	$4,570	$10,244
Alaska	1,487	1,533	3,523
Arizona	2,956	2,987	6,663
Arkansas	2,554	2,600	5,832
California	26,025	26,512	57,688
Colorado	3,827	3,984	6,318
Connecticut	2,531	2,581	5,781
Delaware	1,187	1,217	2,716
District of Columbia	2,305	2,393	6,574
Florida	10,567	11,124	23,819
Georgia	6,450	6,673	14,850
Hawaii	2,376	2,468	2,716
Idaho	1,342	1,380	3,133
Illinois	12,111	12,271	24,845
Indiana	4,417	4,504	10,065
Iowa	2,229	2,256	5,033
Kansas	1,932	2,000	4,419
Kentucky	4,109	4,184	10,071
Louisiana	5,055	5,148	11,539
Maine	1,337	1,375	3,120
Maryland	4,364	4,512	10,477
Massachusetts	6,139	6,305	14,190
Michigan	8,907	9,155	20,468
Minnesota	3,411	3,484	7,891
Mississippi	3,671	3,731	8,377
Missouri	4,336	4,443	9,852
Montana	1,333	1,371	3,106
Nebraska	1,486	1,556	3,002
Nevada	1,187	1,217	2,716
New Hampshire	1,187	1,217	2,716
New Jersey	7,785	7,974	17,175
New Mexico	1,645	1,688	3,756
New York	22,424	23,017	47,720
North Carolina	7,541	7,874	15,296
North Dakota	1,287	1,322	3,017
Ohio	9,720	10,027	22,744
Oklahoma	2,661	2,723	6,080
Oregon	3,779	3,942	6,634
Pennsylvania	12,619	12,973	25,881
Rhode Island	1,476	1,521	2,716
South Carolina	3,482	3,554	7,951
South Dakota	1,187	1,217	2,931
Tennessee	4,708	4,796	10,747
Texas	18,306	18,864	40,396
Utah	1,544	1,598	3,548
Vermont	1,187	1,217	2,716
Virginia	5,441	5,464	12,366
Washington	3,468	3,636	8,162
West Virginia	3,125	3,259	4,797
Wisconsin	4,012	4,108	9,131
Wyoming	1,187	1,217	2,716
U.S Territories	8,056	8,616	19,375
TOTAL	$268,000	$275,478	$580,964

Source: *The Cost of Excellence*, NEA Government Relations

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Negative Results

The state Board of Education's so-called upgrading of its curriculum guide for HIV/AIDS education ``puts ideology before the health and even the lives of students," charged NEA New Hampshire President Frederick Place in a letter to the board.

Gone from the curriculum guidelines are the U.S. Surgeon General's report on HIV/AIDS; a list of state HIV testing sites; references to the percentage of high school students who are sexually active; and the suggestion that students display compassion for people who are infected.

The board's revision subcommittee "single-handedly revised a guide that was developed with extensive input from educators and health care professionals," Place protested.

NEA New Hampshire plans to publicize its opposition to the board's guidelines right up until the board votes later this month.

WISCONSIN
Imbalanced Budget

Wisconsin legislators may look as though they were cutting weary taxpayers a break, but they produced a 1993-95 budget that Wisconsin Education Association Council President Richard Collins calls "mean-spirited, venomous, and malicious."

The budget—reflecting a backlash against education in this usually progressive state—will limit increases in district per pupil spending to $190 or the cost of living times the average per pupil cost, whichever is greater. So wealthier districts, with higher base spending levels, can increase spending more.

At best, nearly all teachers will receive salary increases below the rate of inflation; some will sustain pay cuts or freezes.

Ironically, property taxes for most will, in fact, increase.

UTAH
Match Doubles

A Utah philanthropist who pledged to match member donations to the UEA Foundation for Children at Risk has kept his word—and much more.

UEA members contributed more than $10,000 to the foundation through payroll deductions during the 1992-93 school year.

The foundation gives scholarships to students who graduate from high school despite obstacles, and awards grants to teachers who develop programs for at-risk students.

When the tally was final, the unknown benefactor sent in a check for $22,000, twice as much as he'd promised. What's more, he added in his letter, "I hope I can keep doing this for years to come."

Meet:

Jeannie Oakes

Bob Filha, Jr.

On the Right Track

In 1970, Jeannie Oakes taught seventh grade English to "two average classes and one low-track class.

"I was astonished," she explains, "at my own reactions to the students and the differing expectations I had for each group. A few years later, when we abandoned ability grouping, I noticed differences in the students' behavior, their attitudes about being students, their assignments, their expectations, and their learning."

In the 20 years since then, Oakes has devoted her academic career to the examination of school tracking and determined that tracking "has no place in an educator's repetoire." She's now vice chair of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Oakes is also the author of several books, including **Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality**, *and is in the middle of a three-year study of 10 schools that have created alternatives to ability grouping.*

Oakes spoke recently with **NEA Today** *staff writer Anita Merina.*

Are teachers who still believe in tracking bad teachers?
I don't think they're bad teachers, but like other professionals, teachers can be deeply entrenched in tradition. For years, teacher education has focused on the best ways to group by ability rather than questioning whether tracking is effective, fair, or discriminatory.

Even good teachers can do bad things. It's very divisive and wrong to say it's the teachers' fault if they don't know any different. But given the research that says tracking is ineffective and actually harmful to students, it's hard to justify continuing the practice.

So why the resistance?
Resistance varies according to the situation, but I'd point to two major issues. One is the insecurity about doing things differently—detracking requires a real change in instructional strategies, in policies, in attitude. People say, "I don't have the skills to make this kind of change," or, "I don't have a curriculum that will work in a heterogeneous classroom." Maintaining the status quo is much easier and far more comfortable.

The second, and more powerful, issue is the political pressure from parents with kids in the high tracks. In nearly every school I've visited, handling parents' concerns has been the toughest issue teachers and administrators face.

Would you say tracking is racist?
I'd say it's a reflection of institutional racism because institutions are often so permeated with attitudes and judgments about how African-American and Hispanic children learn. It's racism—deeply embedded, institutional racism. People are essentially unaware of it because it's so well rationalized. But remember, too, that tracking can occur in schools that don't have minority students.

What's your response to schools and communities that resist detracking?
We have to acknowledge that detracking is frightening, particularly to those who are at an advantage because of it. You don't hear the voices of those parents whose kids are negatively affected because there's often a social stigma to acknowledging your child is in the lower track.

The schools I've observed that have had the most success detracking are the schools that involve parents. One school brought parents in to look at the criteria that separated the tracks. When parents saw how arbitrary the decision making was, they realized it was time to change.

One high school brought parents in as advocates for lower track students—even put them into classrooms for observations. The parents began to see for themselves the impact tracking had on attitudes and behavior.

When tracking goes, what changes?
Successful detracking requires dramatically altered assumptions about nearly everything at school—students, learning, and the purposes of schooling. Effective alternatives require fundamental changes in school organization and classroom practices.

What kind of changes?
Tracking supports and is supported by much else that's wrong with schools—thin, skills-based curricula; passive, teacher-dominated instructional strategies; standardized, paper-and-pencil assessment.

That's why detracking isn't simply remixing the grouping of students. I wouldn't advocate that. There must be real reconfiguration of resources, professional development to address the changes in instructional and assessment strategies, and community support.

Fortunately heterogeneity leads to new levels of instruction, and more interactive and authentic types of learning that engage students and teachers.

Some educators are worried about disruptive students in mixed groups.
Behavioral problems seem to be reduced in heterogeneous groupings. The students seem to be much more responsive to a different set of norms. Detracking tends to break up the old concentrations of "bad actors" who exist at all levels. So when you break up these old groups and disperse them into other groups, you find behavior changing.

Add to this creative instructional strategies that keep the students engaged, and they begin to embrace learning. It's at this point that they also begin to see disruptive behavior as contrary to their desire to learn new things.

How can teachers give students extra help—or extra challenges?
Teachers need to create rich, multidimensional learning opportunities for all children. When children are extraordinary, you try to find special experiences for them. That doesn't mean separate classes, but it may mean an extra hour here or there.

To help students struggling to keep up, some schools schedule students' time with resource teachers after school. Others team regular teachers and teachers assigned to remedial programs so special help can be incorporated into the regular classroom. Still others use peer or cross-age tutoring for after-school help.

Tell us about your research project.
It's a three-year study of 10 schools that are developing alternatives to ability grouping and tracking. Right now, we're completing the second round of visits.

We want to know how the school staff worked to change the tracking system, the strategies they used to address staff and community concerns, the instructional changes that occurred with the shift to heterogeneous grouping, and the impact of these changes on the students.

We plan to look carefully for evidence that educators and policy makers who are attempting detracking reforms are simultaneously working to reshape norms.

What would you recommend to schools considering detracking?
There's no real recipe for detracking. Reading the research is the springboard for discussion, and that leads to change. Teachers have powerful stories about their own experience as students in the lower tracks and as change agents for detracking. Now's the time to talk and listen.

Is There Life After Tracking?

Yes if you're willing to throw out old labels and teaching practices for something different and better.

Veteran teacher Marcia Lile agrees detracking is difficult and some parents aren't convinced it's better, but she's sure the kids are learning more.

Despite all the evidence and all the research that shows the negative effects tracking has on students, the practice continues. So do arguments like these.

From teachers: "How else can you address the different needs of different children?"

From parents: "My son's too bright to be lumped together with slower kids. He'll be bored."

From administrators: "Arranging schedules so teachers can share classes of mixed ability kids is practically impossible."

"We've all heard these comments," notes UCLA professor Jeannie Oakes, who's spent 20 years studying tracking (see Meet, page 9). "But the facts are that all three of these obstacles can be overcome, and, more important, kids will get a better education if schools quit tracking kids into ability groups."

An overwhelming amount of research supports the view that tracking perpetuates academic and social inequalities. Since the 1980s, well-respected education reform advocates like Anne Wheelock, Robert Slavin, and John Goodlad have all pointed to tracking's harmful effects.

Turning Points, a 1989 Carnegie Foundation report by former Maryland Superintendent of Schools David Hornbeck, labeled tracking as "one of the most divisive and damaging practices in existence."

In 1990, the NEA Executive Committee's Subcommittee on Academic Tracking released a multi-year study that confirmed tracking's negative impact on students. And other evidence of tracking's negative nature continues to mount.

Given all this evidence and sentiment, you'd think that tracking would be on its way out. You'd think that, but you'd be wrong.

Even for school employees who are convinced that tracking is a bad idea, questions remain: How do we end tracking? And, exactly what do we put in its place?

Members of the sixth grade teaching team at Kammerer Middle in Louisville, Kentucky, think they've found some answers.

In 1989, after reviewing the research and closely observing their school's rigid tracking system, teachers Janet Pearson, Marcia Lile, Alberta Eiden, and Peg Darcy submitted a detracking proposal to their principal, Nancy Weber.

"We were convinced that tracking was creating not only academic but even racial segregation within our school," recalls Lile. "That same year we decided to change the way our 116 students were grouped."

"It wasn't just about mixing students of varying abilities together; it was about offering all students the highest levels of instruction and classroom experiences," adds Pearson, the team leader. "Our team would now be an untracked team."

For the sixth grade team, that meant changes in schedule and curriculum. Students would have an enrichment period allowing them to receive assistance when necessary, or to pursue new and more challenging topics. The classes would be activity-oriented, and students would work collaboratively—in cooperative learning groups—as well as individually. In classes where a textbook was used, it would be the advanced textbook.

Today, students of all abilities work side by side with the range of learning and interaction substantially wider than before. Both students and teachers have made surprising discoveries.

"Students come up with more creative assignments because they recognize the strengths of everyone in their team," says Pearson. "Without the labeling, students no longer view one another as competitors or subordinates. Behavior has changed, and grades have too."

And though not all of Kammerer is fully detracked, the work of Pearson, Lile, Eiden, and Darcy has prompted the development of untracked teams at the seventh and eighth grade levels.

"When we saw what the sixth grade team was doing, we wanted to join them," says seventh grade teacher Claudia Runge. "We saw the benefits for the students and the challenges for us as teachers. Many of us said, 'This is the way I want to teach.'"

In Massachusetts, Wellesley Middle School has gone even further. Seven years ago, the seventh and eighth grades were completely tracked, and the sixth grade was tracked in mathematics and language arts. Today, the school has no tracking.

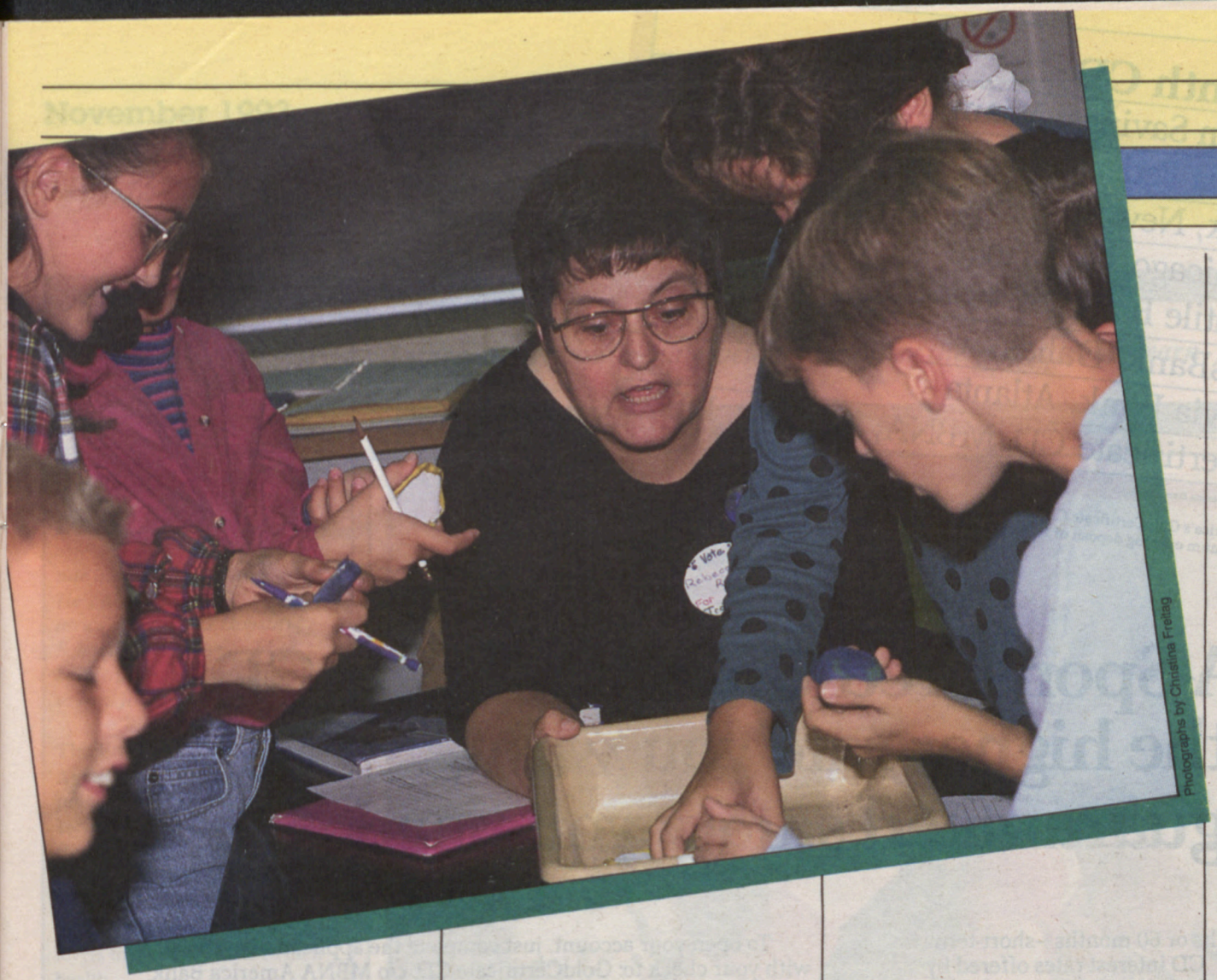
Wellesley teachers were a big part of the change, says Linda Badgley-Smith, head of Wellesley's English and social studies departments. "When we became a middle school in the early 1980's we realized tracking contradicted what we'd learned in inservice about the differences in children's learning styles and innovative classroom teaching.

"The sixth grade already came to us heterogenously grouped, so why break them up?" Badgley-Smith continues. "So we successfully piloted heterogenous grouping at the sixth and seventh grade levels.

"That worked so well we said, 'If we believe in detracking philosophically and it's working well at the classroom level, why not expand it throughout the school? We offered a plan to throw out ability levels, made presentations to the parents, and Wellesley became a detracked school."

Detracking strategies at Kammerer and Wellesley Middle Schools are different, but teachers at both schools agree on some basic guidelines:

➤ *Detracking your classroom or your school requires real change in the way*



Photographs by Christina Freitag

Louisville teacher Janet Pearson works easily with groups of kids of mixed ability, after years of teaching kids put on different ability tracks.

you teach. It doesn't mean teaching to the middle. "Teaching that worked in tracked classes doesn't work in mixed ability groups," says Kammerer Middle's Marcia Lile. "We use theme-based curriculum, we do a lot of cooperative learning, we teach at the highest level. And all of our students respond."

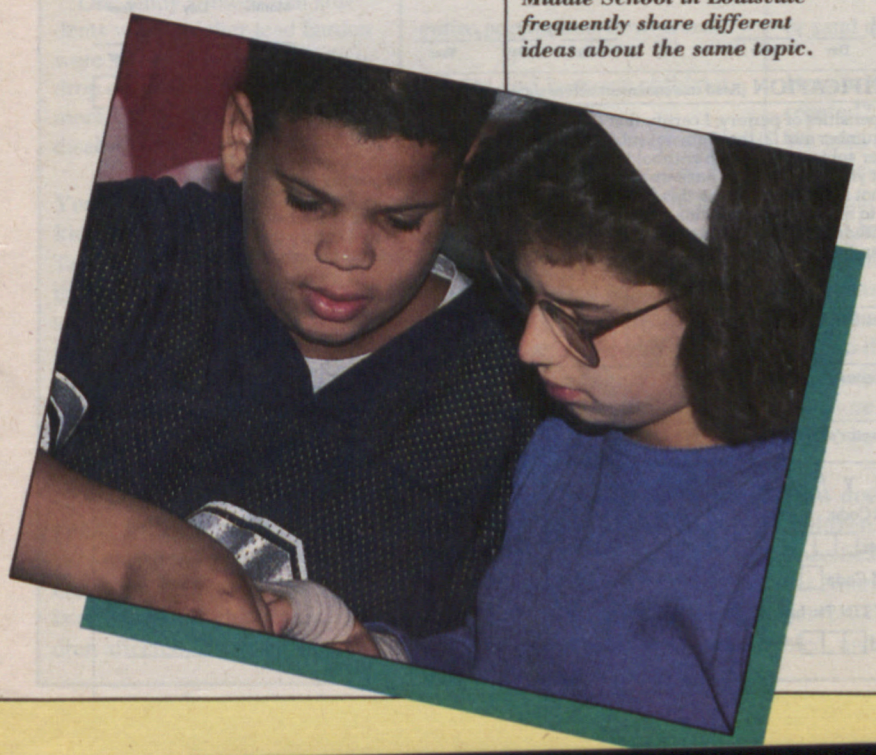
➤ *Detracking is hard work.* "We've never worked so hard," says Wellesley Middle's Badgley-Smith. "We look for alternative ways to get a lesson across, and that requires a lot of creative thinking. The lesson planning, the scheduling, and the assessments have all changed as well. It's hard, but it's rewarding, too."

➤ *Addressing parental concerns is vital to the program's success.* "Parents, particularly parents of children in the high tracks, need to be convinced that what we're doing is not only fair but beneficial to their children," says Badgley-Smith. "Parents were in an uproar in the beginning, but we spent a great deal of time showing them what we were doing in the classroom and how we were emphasizing high learning for all students. We made sure we not only communicated with them but involved them in the change."

"What we also did," says Kammerer's Janet Pearson, "was visit parents at the feeder elementary schools to address their concerns about the new blended programs. That made a big difference."

➤ *Administrative support and professional development are musts.* "We had the opportunity to look at the research, to attend conferences, to receive training in new instructional strategies. We got planning time together and visited schools doing similar things," says Wellesley teacher Bill Atherton.

➤ *Detracking changes assessment.* "We found that alternative forms of assessment such as portfolios create better measures of a child's learning," says Kammerer's Runge. "We still have to give grades, but you really do have the ability to accurately determine a child's progress."



Sixth graders at Kammerer Middle School in Louisville frequently share different ideas about the same topic.

➤ *Extra help must be provided for students.* "This is key for students of all levels and abilities. Extra challenges or extra assistance are important because children learn in a variety of ways," says Badgley-Smith. "It's our role to create that multi-dimensional experience that makes learning possible."

With these changes, says Pearson, come the rewards. "I've watched students transformed in our classrooms, and I've watched old expectations turned completely on their heads.

"Devon, a young man who would have been placed in the 'comprehensive' class, often asks the most stimulating questions during our class period. In the old system, he wouldn't have had the chance to get engaged, the chance to excel the way he has."

Lile agrees. "What I've observed is a blurring of the distinctions between students, and a change in attitude, behavior, and performance. Students who were formerly in the advanced levels find themselves challenged by new assignments and new levels of learning.

"I see myself working with students as individuals and equals, not as categories or labels. You don't realize what a difference that makes until you make that change."

In Louisville, the Kammerer blended program seems to be working. It's been extended to the seventh and eighth grades, and there's talk of expanding it further in the school because there's a higher demand for the detracked classes.

"While there's still some reservation among the parents, my real measures are the students," says Lile. "We see real change happening in our classroom—students looking at each other without labeling, learning from each other, helping each other. That's what this is all about, isn't it?"

—Anita Merina

Reading Recommendations

Interested in detracking but don't know where to begin? The following resources offer thought-provoking discussion and real-life examples to help you on your way.

➤ *Academic Tracking:* Report of the NEA Executive Committee Subcommittee on Academic Tracking, June 1990. Using research and case studies, this report outlines the negative impact of tracking on students, gives NEA's position, and makes suggestions for alternatives to ability grouping.

➤ *"Higher Expectations: Foiling the Bell Curve."* Teacher TV, The Learning Channel, Sunday, November 21, 6-6:30 p.m. ET. This episode features a Guilford, Maine, high school that has abandoned tracking and replaced it with a new, demanding curriculum for all students. This episode is also available on videocassette for $15.95 (plus $2.50 p&h) from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, 800/229-4200.

➤ *Teacher to Teacher,* NEA Professional Library. The NEA Professional Library's popular new series featuring real-life examples of school change will look at tracking in an upcoming book.

➤ *Crossing the Tracks: How "Untracking" Can Save America's Schools,* by Anne Wheelock, The New Press. In this comprehensive guide, Wheelock describes the conditions necessary for detracking and offers reform strategies based on the experiences of schools that have successfully reduced or eliminated tracking.

➤ *How to Untrack Your School,* by Paul George, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). This book explains the disadvantages of ability grouping, describes successful alternatives, and includes a list of both pro- and anti-tracking references.

➤ *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality,* by Jeannie Oakes, Yale University Press, is considered a seminal work on the topic of tracking.

Want to join the ongoing NEA member dialogue on tracking? NEA's new electronic network, NEA Online, features a discussion area on tracking. See page 18 for more information about getting online.

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4.75%	4.84%	Mercantile Bank, St. Louis
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Complete this form and mail with a check (make payable to MBNA/NEA Financial Services CD) for your initial investment, or call NEA Financial Services at **1-800-348-4632**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. Funds may also be wired by calling **1-800-348-4632**.

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HOW MUCH?

Amount Invested: $ _____ **($1,000 minimum)**

HOW LONG?

☐ 6 Months ☐ 18 Months ☐ 30 Months ☐ 48 Months ☐ _____ Days/Months (Must be at least 6 months.)
☐ 12 Months ☐ 24 Months ☐ 36 Months ☐ 60 Months

CHOOSE YOUR INTEREST OPTIONS

Interest is compounded daily and reported in the year when it is paid or credited to you. Please select method and frequency below.

☐ **Credit to CD**
☐ Monthly (IM)
☐ Defer to Maturity (DO) (Terms one year or less)

☐ **Check (CO, CT)**
☐ Monthly (IM)
☐ Quarterly (IQ)
☐ Annually (IY)

☐ **Credit to NEA-sponsored FDIC-Insured Money Market Account (TT)**
Account# _____
☐ Monthly (IM) ☐ Quarterly (IQ)
☐ Annually (IY)

LIST ACCOUNT INFORMATION

(Please print clearly the exact account registration.)

1) Depositor _____

2) Depositor _____

3) Depositor _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone ( ) _____ Business Phone ( ) _____

INDICATE TYPE OF ACCOUNT

(Please check one)

Personal: ☐ Individual/Joint ☐ UGMA ☐ Trust/Custodian

Business: ☐ Sole Proprietorship ☐ Partnership ☐ Corporation ☐ Other _____

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME OR CODE WORD:

_____

(For use in identifying you when you call NEA Financial Services.)

LIST YOUR TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

You must provide your Social Security or Tax I.D. number here:

_____

This number belongs to: _____
Name of person, organization or trust

IMPORTANT WIRE INFORMATION

You may make wire transfers from this account if you have signed wire instructions on file with MBNA America. If you wish to have wire capability, please call **1-800-348-4632** to request a wire agreement.

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If you're currently holding a CD at another bank, and would like to roll it over into a high-interest GoldCertificate CD when it matures, we'll gladly contact you with current rates and assist you in opening an account. Just fill in your phone number and the dates your CDs mature.

Phone ( ) _____ My present CDs are maturing on: ___/___/___ (Month / Day / Year)

___/___/___ (Month / Day / Year) ___/___/___ (Month / Day / Year) ___/___/___ (Month / Day / Year)

CERTIFICATION (Read this statement before signing.)

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that (1) the number shown on this form is my correct tax identification number and (2) that I am not subject to back-up withholding, or the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to back-up withholding. NOTICE: Strike out section (2) above if the IRS has notified you that you are subject to back-up withholding because of underreporting (and the IRS has not terminated that notice). By signing this form, I agree to the MBNA America Terms and Conditions that will be sent to me with confirmation of deposit. I also understand that there is a substantial penalty for early withdrawal of certificate funds. By signing this enrollment form, I certify that I am a member in good standing of the National Education Association. (Only one depositor needs to be a member.)

X _____
Depositor's Signature Date

X _____
Depositor's Signature Date

X _____
Depositor's Signature Date

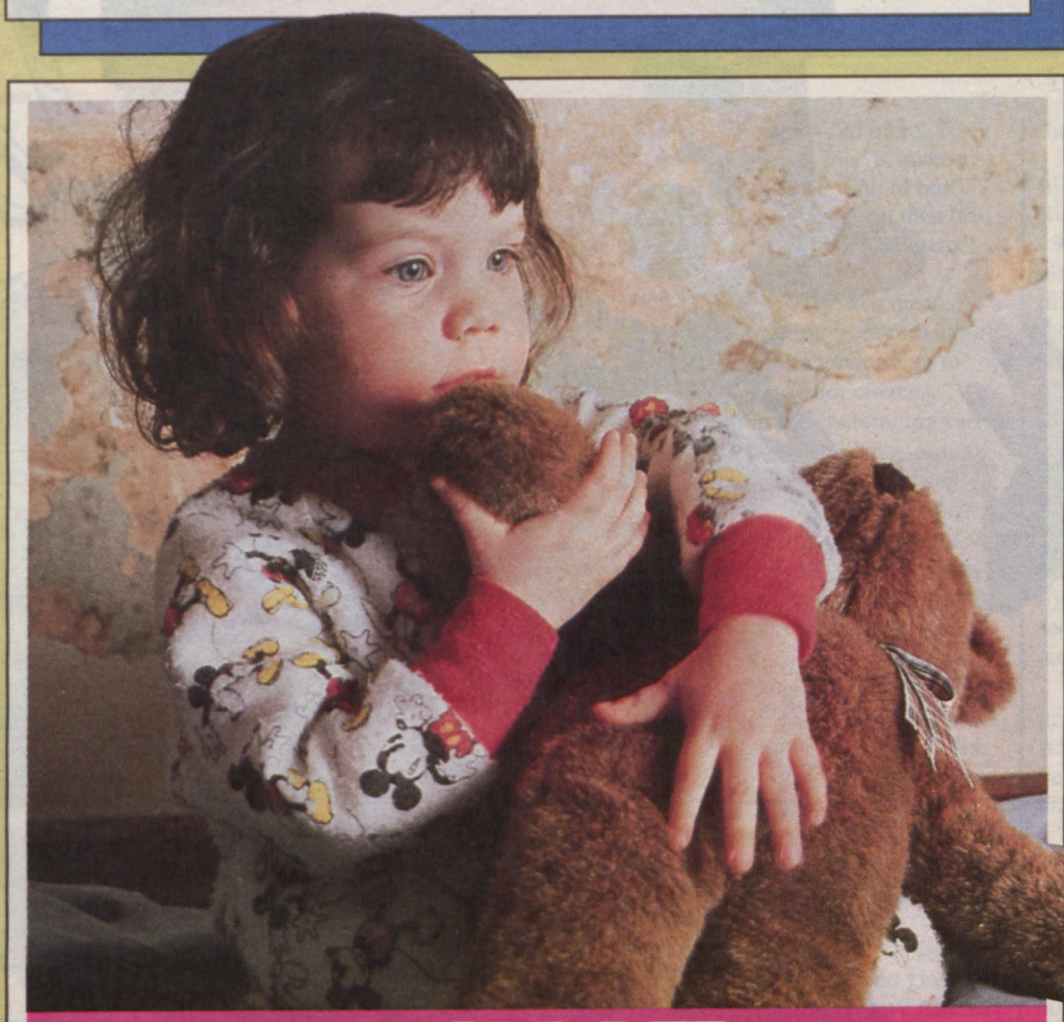
SSN: Y N Ref# _____ Prod C D A Account# _____
SSN Code: 0 1 Wire: Y N Campaign 3007 _____
Chptr ☐☐☐ Rate _____ Eff. Date _____
W/H Code ☐☐☐ Own. Code ☐☐ SubOwn. Code ☐☐
SSN TIN Tic Ln: 1 2 3 Rep Code ☐☐☐ Wire Ref# _____
Prod ☐☐☐ Trans. From _____ Prep. Int. _____

FOR BANK USE ONLY

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn

Dr. J. Julian Chisolm, Jr., is the director of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Clinic at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. He's also a professor of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and has been treating children exposed to lead for more than 30 years.



WHAT LEAD DOES TO KIDS

The Environmental Protection Agency recently labeled lead poisoning "this country's most serious environmental threat." True?
Absolutely. EPA estimates that over three million children under age six have blood lead levels that pose a threat to their health.

Studies show 55 percent of poor minority children have blood lead levels higher than 10 micrograms per deciliter—that's the level the Centers for Disease Control now considers "acceptable."

The vast majority have levels between 10 and 15 mpd, and we can't say they're "poisoned." But 20 percent of the children screened here in Baltimore have blood lead levels above 20 mpd—and that can lead to significant consequences.

Like what?
Three recent studies found that the effects of low-level lead exposure on a child's developing nervous system appear to be long-lasting.

Studies are also finding small but significant reductions in IQ that are related to lead blood levels averaged over the first six years of life.

One study showed that students with a higher lead burden were seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to have a reading disability.

You mean lead is making our kids dumber?
Taking into account all the things that may potentially affect a child's cognitive abilities, sustained exposure to lead still, on average, reduces IQ by three points for every 10 microgram increment above 10 mpd of blood.

A lot of people think a few IQ points are a minor matter—and they may be, for an individual child. But the impact on society is enormous. With so many children affected, we're shifting entire populations downward.

Where and how are children exposed to lead?
The problem is the worst where the cities are the oldest, and that's generally cities from the Mississippi River on east.

The cause of exposure is primarily lead-based paint, which was banned in the United States in 1978. Young children may eat peeling paint chips. More commonly, children touch lead-containing dust, then put their hands in their mouths.

Among the biggest problems are double-hung wooden window frames (every time you open and close them, you grind a little paint off) and do-it-yourself home renovators who burn or sand down lead-based paint.

How is lead poisoning treated?
We tend to treat children with blood levels over 40 mpd with a drug that accelerates that excretion of lead from the body. But treatment is reserved for the worst cases. There's no point in treating a child who is going back to the same house. Our emphasis is to try to reduce the exposure, often by finding alternative housing for these kids.

How does lead exposure affect children?
Specifically, lead interferes with the communication between nerves. The messages get garbled, and the child has difficulty comprehending. That affects short-term memory and the brain's ability to pay attention. If I tell a child to go upstairs, get my hat, and bring it back, that's three separate messages. This child may go upstairs, but then he won't know what to do.

It can be very confusing for teachers. There's a tendency to think that Johnny isn't following through because he doesn't want to. But it may be because he can't. It's a very subtle thing.

How can educators recognize lead-exposed children?
That's hard, because there's no signature for lead exposure. Still, if the exposure is really severe, the problem will be evident in the first grade. Affected children may start falling behind in reading and spelling. If they fall far enough behind, you get secondary behaviors—fidgeting, popping out of seats, daydreaming, disrupting the class.

The real academic problems come when the amount of reading increases in third or fourth grade. These kids simply can't keep up.

That sounds like attention deficit disorder.
Yes, it presents a similar syndrome. Exposure to lead, in fact, may be a contributing factor to ADD.

What can educators do?
By the time a teacher sees the problem, there's not much that can be done except to compensate in the ways the child is educated. Some behaviors may improve when children are put in smaller classes with similar children. I often recommend audio-visual aids. In general, lead-affected children will do better with their visual abilities.

But educators can play a big role in prevention. Educators can encourage parents who live in older housing to have their younger children tested for lead. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control now recommends that all children be screened for lead exposure at one year of age. Children at high risk should be tested earlier and at regular intervals until age five.

Are school buildings part of the problem?
That's unlikely, but it depends on the age and condition of the school. If you work in a school built before 1940, there's almost 100 percent certainty that the white paint used contained lead. It's important to look at the condition of the paint. If it's blistering or peeling, call your local health department for advice.

NEA's Health Information Network is beginning a project to help members deal with the problem of lead poisoning. If you're involved in local efforts to educate parents and students about the dangers of lead exposure, write to Roberta Hantgan, Special Projects Coordinator, NEA-HIN, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

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His name is Willie Munchright™ and he's the host of **What's On Your Plate.®** It's a program created by McDonald's® and the Society for Nutrition Education to help you teach your class all about eating right. The program includes a video of Willie's Public Service Announcements, as seen Saturday mornings on CBS, a leader guide with a colorful poster illustrating the Food Guide Pyramid and a student activity brochure.

Or you can choose **Healthy Growing Up,™** a group of lessons and activities for kids in kindergarten through third grade. They focus on self-esteem and fitness as well as nutrition, and have earned the support of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Health and nutrition are an important part of a child's education. Use these teaching aids to help guide your class to a healthier, more active lifestyle in a fun and interesting way. For more information on these and other programs, write: McDonald's Education Resource Center, ADS, P.O. Box 8002, St. Charles, IL 60147, or call 1-800-627-7646.

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

Richard Nowitz

Parents in the Clay County area often stop by to talk with Family Resource Center Director Penny Robinson (second, from right). With Robinson are Ann Garrison, Abbie Grubb, and Vanda Smith.

Front and Center

Ever wish for a full-time person to coordinate social services for your students and their families? Wishes sometimes come true. Ask NEA member Penny Robinson.

In the hills and hollers of southeastern Kentucky, behind the classrooms of Goose Rock Elementary School, stands a small building that's become the center of the Clay County community.

It's here where parents study for the GED, get their blood pressure checked, learn how to fill out tax forms. Where senior citizens work with children, and working parents find child care. On occasion, it's where teachers come for professional development.

In this small community, the Goose Rock Family Resource Center has become a lifeline in an area where illiteracy rates are high, jobs are scarce, and a large percentage of schoolchildren have been classified as "at-risk." In the process, the Center's taken a heavy load off area schools and school employees.

Many in the community credit NEA member Penny Robinson, the Center's director, for the Center's success. Together with the Center's advisory committee—made up of six parents, the principal, two teachers, and district and community representatives—Robinson has created a center that addresses virtually all of her community's social service needs.

And because Robinson is a 21-year classroom veteran, she's made sure the Center focuses on school needs, too. When teachers were preparing for the transition to an ungraded primary system, which the state's reform act mandated, Robinson held a workshop at the Center.

When teachers wanted to use children's folk music in their classrooms, Robinson arranged a professional development session. She even coordinates the district's parent volunteer program.

Family resource centers, like Goose Rock's, were made possible by the Kentucky Education Reform Act. KERA calls for family resource centers to serve elementary schools when 20 percent or more of the students fall below the federal poverty level.

The Act also called for youth centers. The Goose Rock Center fills both roles—and more.

"What we've done is make a clear assessment of *all* of our community's needs and then tailored our Center to meet them," explains Robinson.

In Clay County, that means doing everything from providing prenatal care to job training to helping area senior citizens. "We accomplish this by bringing various community agencies together," continues Robinson.

"Many of these agencies had never worked together before. Now we have monthly meetings to coordinate our services to families and children to make sure no one falls through the cracks."

Robinson is particularly proud of the Center's link to the state health department. With this link, the Center is able to offer classes for pregnant teenagers, blood pressure checks, a drug abuse help-line, nutrition counseling, even an occasional exercise class.

"We have children who can now be fed, who now have clothes, toiletries, hearing aids, and glasses," Robinson says. "We have parents who have come to see the Center—and the school—as a place they can count on."

Even seemingly unrelated activities benefit the schools, notes Robinson. One example: from 1991 to 1992, the Center offered classes and exams for commercial drivers' licenses to parents—mostly fathers—who had to pass the test by the April deadline set by Congress. Robinson taught the class and administered the exam.

"In a community where jobs are hard to find, making sure these parents passed the tests meant they remained in their jobs," says Robinson. "That meant the family's economic situation was secure, and the children's school performance didn't suffer."

Goose Rock Elementary School principal Jimmy Morgan, who was skeptical of the Center in the beginning, has become one of its biggest supporters.

"Now, we have parents involved in schools, families who have all kinds of services at their disposal, and a healthier, happier student population," he says.

"The Center and the school complement each other, and that's the way it should be."

—Anita Merina

Richard Nowitz

Penny Robinson, who directs the Goose Rock Family Resource Center, coordinates with the local elementary school to make sure students like Heather Jackson get the services they need.

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Oliver Wendell Holmes

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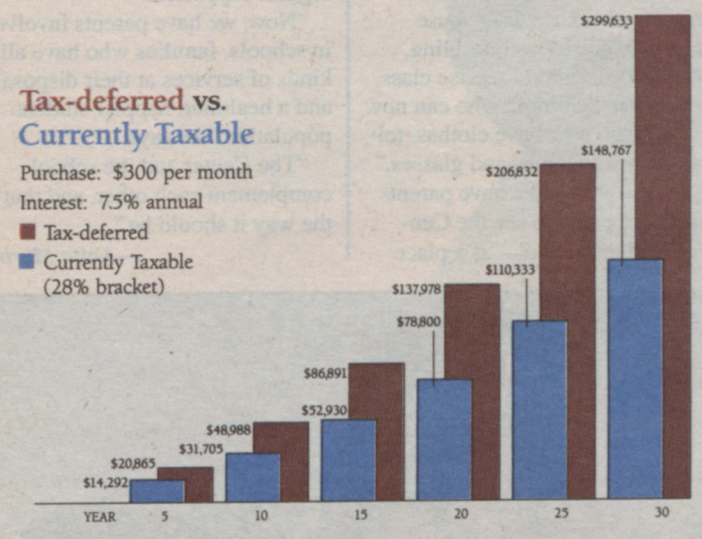

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IDEA EXCHANGE

'You're So Fine'

My special education students thrive on positive comments.

Because of this, I encourage class members to compliment one another. We discuss how we feel when someone pays us a compliment, and I write several examples of compliments on the board.

Then I distribute a brown sandwich bag to each student. These bags are to collect compliments.

I tack the bags—each labeled with a student's name—to a bulletin board. During the week, each student writes positive notes to three different students and places them in the appropriate bags.

Every Wednesday, the students read the notes in their bags, return them to the bags, and tack the bags to the bulletin board again. After three months, the kids take their bags home. I urge them to read the notes whenever they feel down.

Barbara Dooley
Wallace Middle School
Waterbury, Connecticut

Matching Table to Topic

Try changing your desk or table top to match the current classroom unit. Here's how.

Buy a clear midweight piece of plastic—the kind used to cover a window during cold weather. This plastic comes on a roll in hardware stores and can be cut to size.

Under the clear, washable plastic, place a poster or a map or anything specific to the unit you're teaching. To highlight a different subject, lift the plastic and replace the visual with another.

Voila! Your furniture matches your new study unit.

Sandra Neuhauser
Winand Elementary School
Pikesville, Maryland

'I solemnly swear. . .'

Last year, my fourth and fifth grade English as a Second Language students had a Presidential Inauguration Day activity that could be easily adapted for state and local inauguration ceremonies, too.

After reading about the inauguration and discussing it, the students worked together to make a banner, explanatory charts, and a life-sized figure of President Clinton.

They created the figure by having one youngster lie down while another traced the outline of his body onto paper. The kids then drew clothing on the form and colored it in. To this they added a photo of the President's head.

As a final component, the children draw a cartoon speech bubble containing the Presidential oath of office.

Diana Nieradka
School No. 7
Belleville, New Jersey

Challenging All Students

At our school, severely physically challenged students experience what I call "socially interactive integration."

To enrich the learning experience of all students, I pair off each physically challenged student with a regular student for a specific class. This allows the physically challenged students to work with their peers in upper level classes—and to participate meaningfully in classes that would otherwise be considered too advanced for their abilities.

In chemistry, for example, they make soap or test the strength of glue. In general science, they bend and blow glass. In drafting, they team up to design, draft, and build projects with partners.

A bonus: the program develops positive relations between physically challenged and non-physically challenged students.

Brenda Ryan
Bemidji High School
Bemidji, Minnesota

Proud To Help

Students at our elementary school gain pride and a sense of caring and accomplishment by helping out with our school-wide collection of food, clothing, toys, and books for needy families.

The kids help clean the clothing and toys, then weigh, sort, and stock the food donations. Classes collecting the most food receive prizes.

As a school social worker, I also conduct parenting classes that offer free child care, tutoring, and snacks. Older students help as volunteers. Besides enhancing their own self-worth, these activities enhance school pride, as well.

Sharon Block
Dr. Daniel Bright Elementary School
Cottonwood, Arizona

Send your classroom-tested ideas to: Idea Exchange, NEA Today, *1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.*

TRENDS

Child Care: A Question of Quality

First, a few facts: Only 27 percent of families with children under age six are "traditional families." Twenty percent of all children live with one parent. The percentage of women in the workplace with children under age six has risen from 20 percent to 60 percent in the last 30 years. And 54 percent of women with children under age one work outside the home.

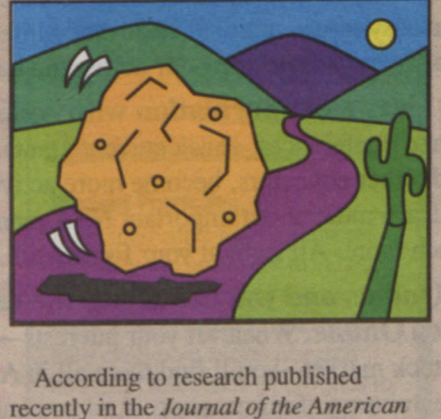
Obviously families are searching for high quality, affordable child care. And, according to a new report from the Committee for Economic Development, they aren't getting it.

U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) says frankly, "Child care quality is very uneven...we're not doing a very good job of making sure our children get the best care."

The CED report notes that in addition to the "uncoordinated federal approach, the creation and enforcement of state standards for child care programs are woefully inadequate...43 percent of children in out-of-home child care are unprotected by state safety standards."

A Rolling Stone...

Children whose families move frequently are 77 percent more likely to have behavioral problems and 35 percent more likely to have failed a grade than children who seldom move.



According to research published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, moving frequently—defined as six or more times over a child's lifetime—can be as harmful in a child's life as poverty or living in a single-family household.

Each year some 17 to 18 percent of Americans move. Poor families move 50 to 100 percent more frequently than non-poor ones.

Thirtysomething Moms

The rate of childbearing among women aged 30-34 dropped by 2 percent in 1991, the National Center for Health Statistics reports. That's a turning point for women in their thirties, whose childbearing rate had risen steadily since the '70s.

Experts attribute the decline to several factors. There's been an increase in couples who've decided to have no children, and, probably as a result of delayed childbearing, there's also a higher rate of infertility.

At the same time, the study notes, births to teenage mothers remain on the rise. These rates had declined steadily during the '70s and early '80s, but reversed in 1986 and have been increasing since.

Mortality Disparity

The good news: life expectancy in the United States has reached an all-time high of 75.5 years, and infant mortality is down to a record 8.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The bad news: these gains aren't consistent among different racial and ethnic groups, concludes a recent government report *Health, United States, 1992*.

The declining rate of infant mortality among the general population—positive, to be sure—sours when you see that the infant mortality rate among Black infants is still double that of whites.

Why the disparity? A recent issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* points out a possible cause: Black mothers are twice as likely as other women to smoke, drink, and use other drugs during pregnancy.

A possible reason that's not cited often enough is the lack of affordable, quality health insurance for all Americans. Babies whose parents have no insurance are 30 percent more likely to die or be seriously ill at birth than those from insured families.

How Big a Bite?

Rural high school seniors wouldn't do very well on the TV game show "The Price is Right." A recent survey found that high school seniors in Ohio's Appalachia vastly overestimated the cost of college.

Of those surveyed, more than half guessed that the cost of attending a two-year college was double the actual average cost. Fully 14 percent thought the rate was five times higher than it actually is.

Among Ohio's poorest students, 80 percent said they'd like to go to college; only a third have actually done so. Only 35 percent of those surveyed thought they could afford college.

Students cited their need to make money as a major impediment to attending college. What's more, many of those surveyed knew little about student aid opportunities.

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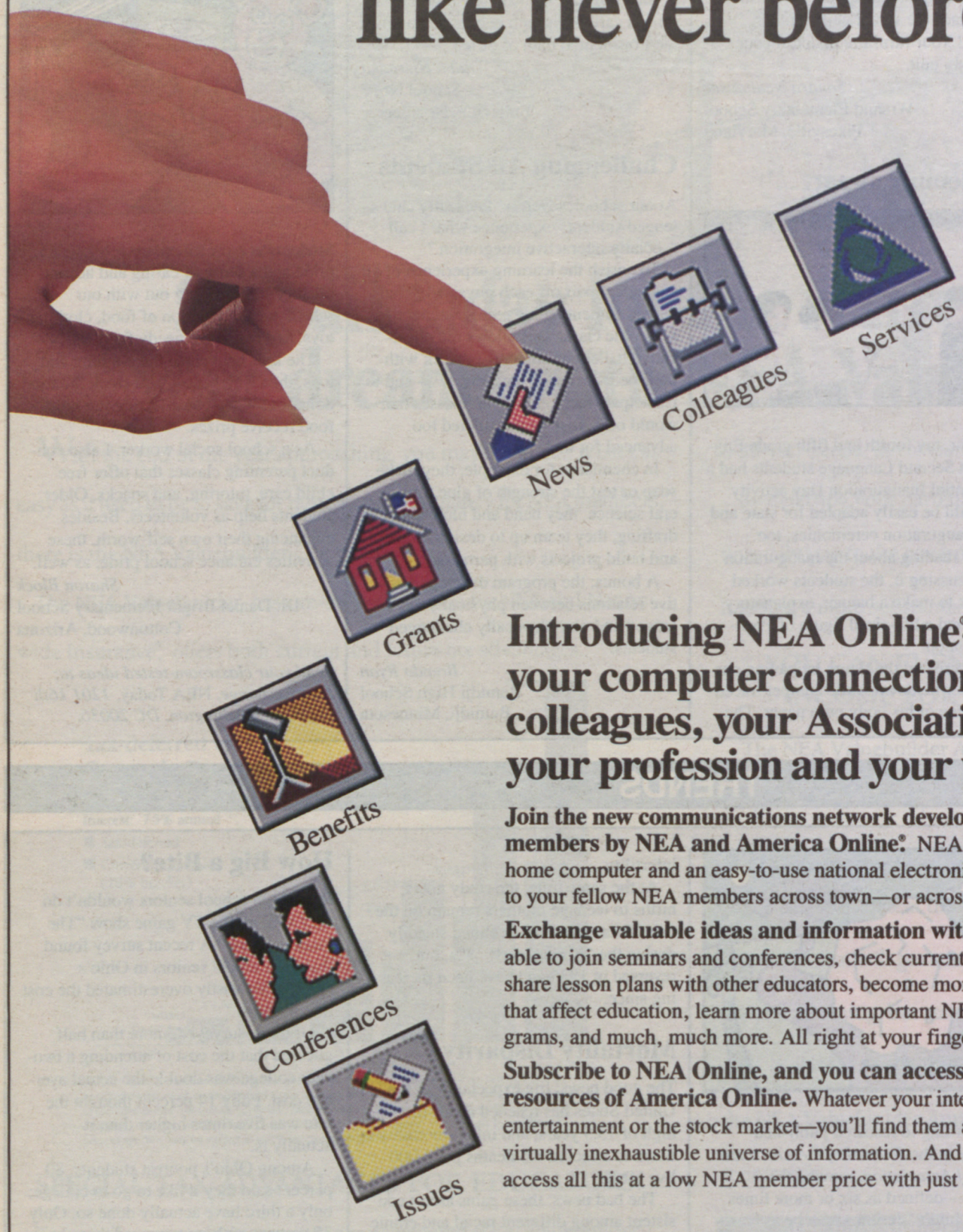

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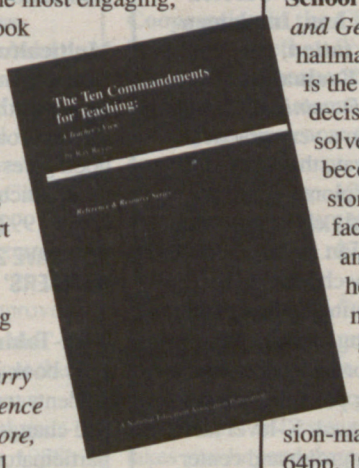

Children of Promise: Literate Activity in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms. *Shirley Brice Heath and Leslie Mangiola.* A how-to look at a school-university partnership project for cross-grade, multilingual, interactive tutoring in reading and writing. Leslie Mangiola's bilingual language arts classroom in Redwood City, California, is the focus of this blueprint for literacy improvement. The dramatic success of this program demonstrates that you can create a climate where all students, including those often labeled "at risk," can truly be children of promise. A joint publication of NEA, Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, and AERA. 64pp. 1991. (1844-3-20-QG) $8.95
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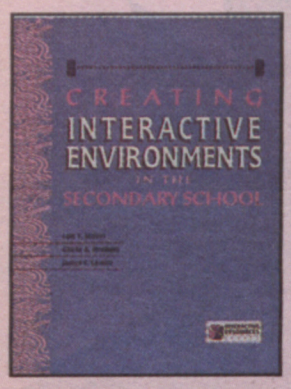

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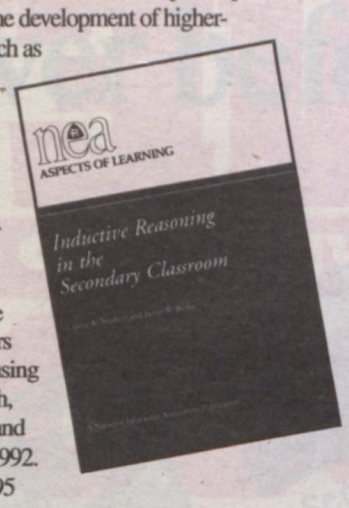

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No one chooses to be "at-risk". Empathetic intervention can help a young child's family break the cycle of factors that places them at-risk. This book is about strategies for successful empowerment. 208pp. 1993. (0366-7-10-QG) $16.95

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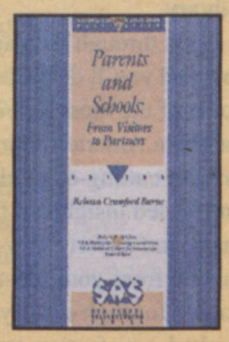

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Teachers as Leaders: Evolving Roles. *Carol Livingston, Editor.* One of the key elements of restructured schools is the new role of the teacher. Experts and teacher leaders provide insights into what is behind words like leader, collaboration, empowerment, and change agent as experienced in the school renewal environment. The narratives are personal and packed with insightful revelations. 176pp. 1992. (1848-6-10-QG) $15.95

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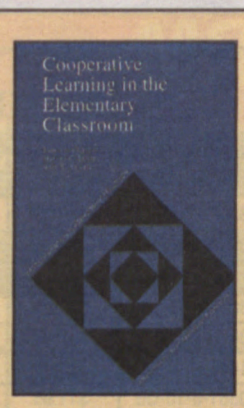
Cooperative Learning in the Elementary Classroom. *Lawrence Lyman, Harvey Foyle, and Tara Azwell.*



Everyone is talking about it. Now there is a book that gives you a step-by-step approach to planning and implementing proven cooperative learning techniques in your classroom. Adapt the thematic units and other activities in this practical handbook to build social skills and teach conflict management; to enliven drill and practice sessions; and to integrate the curriculum. In addition this book makes the connection between cooperative learning and whole language, critical thinking, portfolio assessment, and classroom diversity. 128 pp. 1993. (3042-7-10-QG) $14.95

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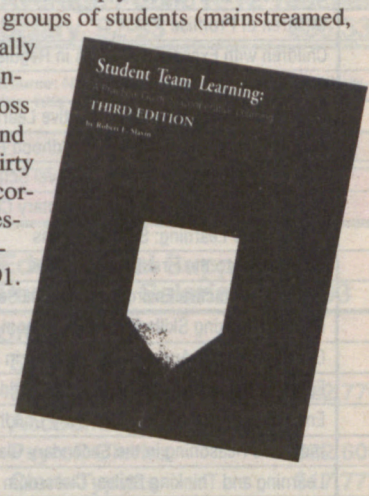
Student Team Learning: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Learning. Third Edition. *Robert E. Slavin.* This practical, down-to-earth approach to effective use of cooperative learning fully explores three student team learning techniques that significantly increase learning. Many years of research have gone into refining these methods, which can increase student motivation and help you be more effective at handling diverse groups of students (mainstreamed, racially or culturally heterogeneous, untracked, etc.) across all grade levels and subjects. Over thirty sample games, scoring sheets, and lesson plans are provided. 128pp. 1991. (1845-1-10-QG) $18.95



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Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning: Students, Teachers, and Administrators. *Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle.* This bestseller takes cooperative learning beyond the classroom. It provides vital, dynamic ways to build change-inducing groupings among students, in parent-teacher interactions, and with your colleagues in team meetings and in-services. You will learn the authors' unique plan for extending cooperative learning to all school forces through powerful icebreakers and positive group interaction that leads to improved creative thinking and effective planning for meaningful change. 96pp. 1990. (1842-7-10-QG) $11.95

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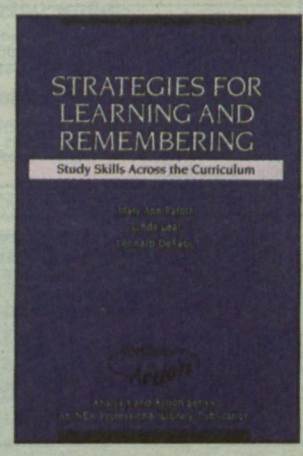

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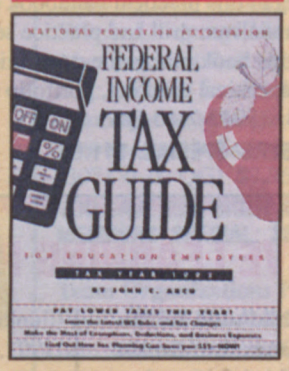
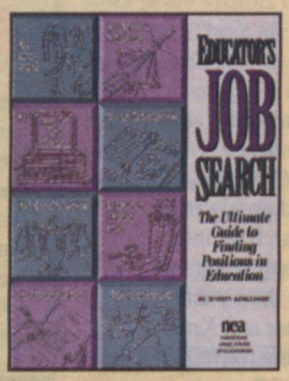


NEA Federal Income Tax Guide for Education Employees. (Tax Year 1993). *John C. Arch.* There's so much talk about what's happening to taxes this year—fact, fiction, and rumor—you need this year's comprehensive guide to help file accurate and complete returns to legally pay the least amount of taxes. Thousands of your colleagues do! The new edition covering the 1993 tax law changes will be available in mid-December. Check the box on the order form or call for information on our special pre-publication offer.



Educator's Job Search. *Martin Kimeldorf.* This is the definitive guide to landing your dream job in education. Exercises in the book help you identify your teaching strengths, investigate the needs of desirable districts, network to discover job opportunities, write an impressive resume, prepare for interviews, and effectively organize your job search. 96pp. 1993. (1860-5-10-QG) $15.95
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Children with Exceptional Needs in Regular Classrooms. *Libby G. Cohen, Editor.* This book presents emerging trends and preferred practices for teaching exceptional students in regular classrooms, as well as the legal requirements governing their education. 184pp. 1992. (3009-5-10-QG) $11.95
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School Violence: A Survival Guide for School Staff (with emphasis on robbery, rape, and hostage taking). *Chester L. Quarles.* This publication is about school staff staying alive in a dangerous school environment. It's about being a "successful" victim and protecting students. The focus is on crime prevention, school security, and school safety. It is no exaggeration to say that this handbook could literally save the life of a staff person in a threatening situation. 48pp. 1989. (0243-1-10-QG) $7.95
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American Education at a Glance

Facts and Figures about America's Schools

Minority Public K-12 Enrollment As Percentage of Total K-12 Enrollment	41.0
Black	22.0
Hispanic	14.0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	4.0
American Indian	1.0

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education., Office of Civil Rights: 1990 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey (".. based on a representative sample of 3,434 public school districts and 40,025 schools...")

K-12 Minority Teachers As Percentage of Total K-12 Teachers	
Teachers	12.2
Black	6.8
Hispanic	2.7
Asian American/Pacific Islander	—
Native American	—
Other	2.7

Source: AACTE: *Teacher Education Enrollment Survey*, Fall 1989.

Total Public K-12 Enrollment	41,839,000
By Grade Division	
Total K-8 Enrollment	34,422,000
Total Public K-8 Enrollment	30,353,000
Total 9-12 Enrollment	12,610,000
Total Public 9-12 Enrollment	11,486,000

SOURCE: U.S. Dept. of Education: *Projections of Education Statistics to 2003.*

Total Number of K-12 Public School Teachers	2,431,000
Elementary	1,451,000
Secondary	980,000

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education: *Projections of Education Statistics to 2003.*

Total Public, Private K-12 Enrollment	47,032,000

Total Number of Public Schools	84,538
Elementary	59,015
Secondary	20,406
Combined K-12 Schools	2,325
Other	2,792

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education.: *Digest of Education Statistics 1992.*

Total Number of Private Schools	26,807

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education: *Digest of Education Statistics 1992.*

Number of Public School Districts	15,358

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education.: *Digest of Education Statistics 1992.*

Total Number of Public, Private K-12 Teachers	2,786,000
Elementary	1,705,000
Secondary	1,081,000

Average Public K-12 Teacher Salary '92-93	$35,334

Source: NEA Research: *Estimates of School Statistics, 1992-93.*

Educational Support Personnel Salaries,* '92-93	
Office:	
Secretaries/ Stenographers	$22,770
Accounting/ Payroll Clerks	$22,605
Clerk-Typists	$17,772
School Building:	
Secretaries/ Stenographers	$18,104
Library Clerks	$13,311

Hourly Wage Rates Paid ESP* '92-93	
Teacher Aides:	
Instructional	$8.31
Non-instructional	$7.82
Custodians	$9.51
Cafeteria Workers	$7.56
School Bus Drivers	$10.15

**School district survey averages by job category, averaged again by E.R.S. for national figure (without weighting).*

Source: Educational Research Service, *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools, Part 3: Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel in Public Schools, 1992-93.*

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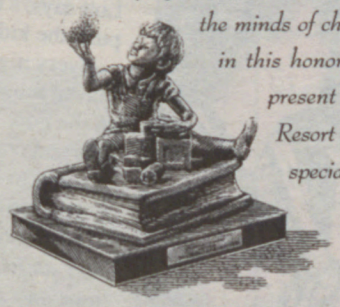

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To nominate an outstanding teacher for next year's American Teacher Awards, please request an application by writing to: The Walt Disney Company Presents The American Teacher Awards, P.O. Box 9805, Calabasas, CA 91372. Applications will be mailed in January, 1994.

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People

She'll Pick America's Best

For the first time ever, women's fast-pitch softball will be an Olympic medal sport, and Utah physical education teacher **Star Orullian** will help pick the 1996 U.S. team.

"Fast-pitch softball is more like baseball than softball," Orullian says. Pitching underhand using a windmill-type motion, the hardest-throwing women pitchers can hurl a softball 65 to 70 miles per hour—compared with 90 to 95 miles per hour for major league baseball pitchers.

Orullian, who teaches physical education in Murray, is Utah commissioner of the Amateur Softball Association. The ASA selected Orullian, and six others, to pick players for the women's fast-pitch softball teams that represent the U.S. in international competition, including in the Summer Olympics in 1996.

Orullian trained to be a teacher on a softball scholarship at the University of Utah and went on to become a three-time All-American in ASA competition.

Paul Fraughton

Judy Lutz-Spencer

Giving Kids a 'Safe Haven'

Every evening from 5 to 8, you can find Springfield, Illinois, teacher associate **Irma Lott** and 50 or 60 kids in a safe place—a safe haven, to be exact.

Located amid three housing projects in a high-crime neighborhood, Safe Haven is an after-school program Lott (in green) directs. In addition to help with homework, Safe Haven gives neighborhood third to twelfth graders a chance to participate in activities from bowling to gardening to community service.

"Kids have a real need for a place they can go in the evenings," Lott says. "We're busy from 5 o'clock on. We have to literally push the kids out the door at 8."

Every night from 5 to 6, the students who show up at Safe Haven must check in, then do homework. "That's the key to get in the door," Lott says. When they're done, they're free to enjoy arts and crafts, photography, aerobics, scouting, skating, even reading to the elderly.

Housed in the Withrow Early Childhood Center, where Lott works during the day, the program is funded by a federal grant and staffed by Lott, two other paid workers, four teenage mentors, and a raft of volunteers.

Lott's proudest moment came when 27 of the students who frequent Safe Haven made the honor roll at their schools. "I've seen a lot of the kids really mature and pull up their grades," Lott, a founding member of the Springfield Educational Support Personnel Association, says. "Many of them had given up on themselves—and now they're honor roll students. That's really rewarding."

Not So Rich, Or Famous

Dick Bernard

"I want kids to know about the life of George Washington's neighbor," explains Minnesota eighth grade American history teacher Spencer Johnson. "After all, most of us come from ordinary backgrounds, and restricting history to only famous figures like George Washington leaves us with an incomplete picture of how life really was in our past."

So Johnson—a "living history" buff—shows his students what life was really like for Civil War soldiers, Plains Indians, fur traders, and other not-so-famous Americans who lived in 18th and 19th century America by dressing, talking, and acting the parts.

But his "stage" isn't limited to his classroom. For the past six years, Johnson has entertained thousands of summer visitors to historic Fort Snelling with his presentation of an authentic 1827 fur trader. He's skinned deer, demonstrated musketry, and explained the ins and outs of the fur trade. And, just a few years ago, Johnson played the (nonspeaking) part of a Civil War soldier in the movie *Glory*.

How did all of this come about? "It's just another way to motivate students," he says.

Science with Sizzle

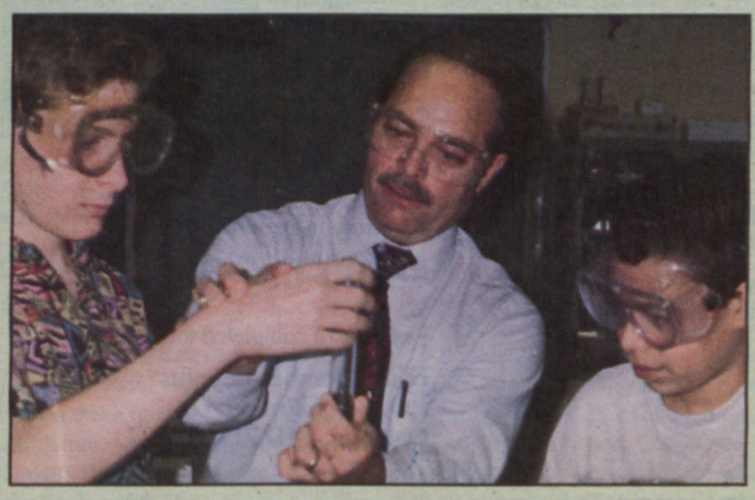
In **Jerry Murray's** classroom in Tampa, Florida, the hand is quicker than the eye. Murray, who's taught science for 24 years at Adams Junior High, has learned how to dazzle his students by combining science instruction with magic tricks.

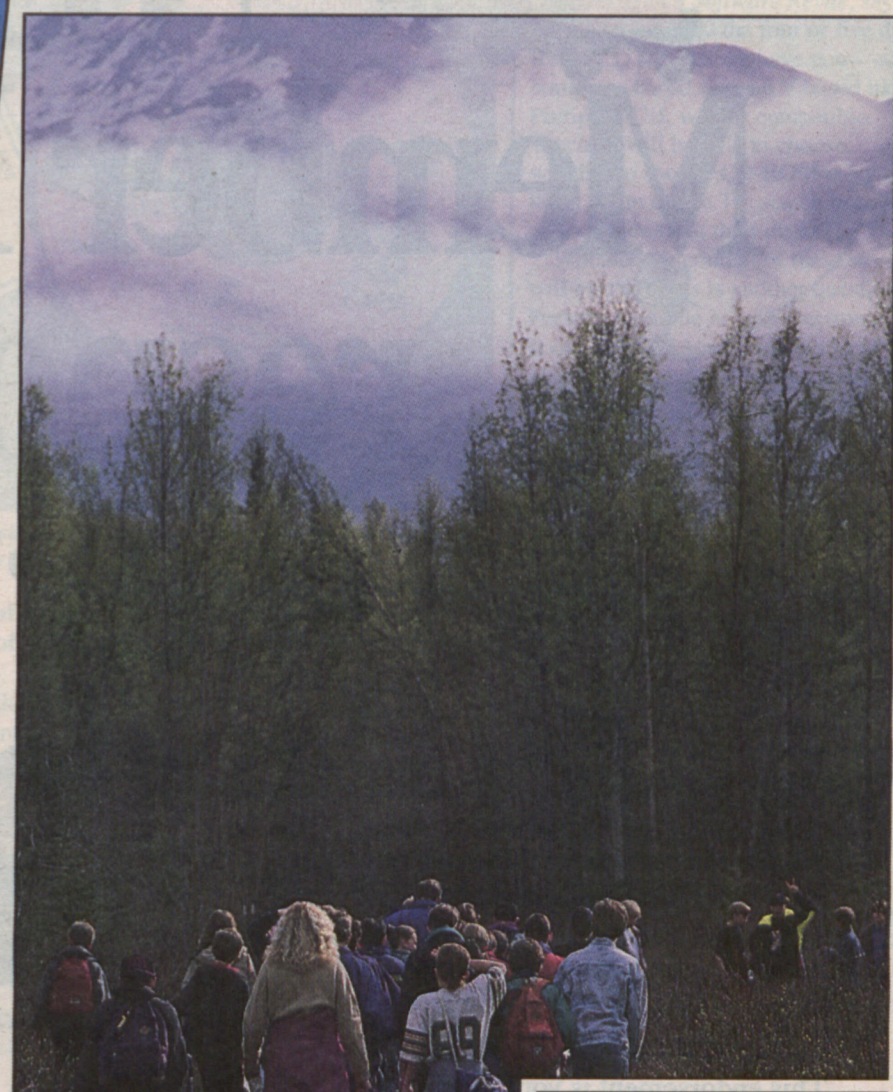
Some examples: Students study the principles of refraction as Murray rotates an initially blank one-inch acrylic cube to reveal a four-digit number that just happens to be the sum of a brief math problem they're required to perform.

(Known as the 1089 trick, students are required to subtract the three digit reverse of a number, say 752. They add that number to the three digit reverse of the second number. The result is always 1089. Try it!)

"It takes a curious mind to learn science," says Murray. "I try to hook them with tricks to capture their attention. Then I introduce science-based principles as I try to build on their interest in how things work."

His success in making complex topics appear wondrous and simple is one of many factors that earned him an award as 1993 Florida Teacher of the Year. He intends to use part of the $10,000 cash award to bring lasers and holograms into his classroom.




Sven-Eric Hansson

Sven-Eric Hansson

Ah, Wilderness

When you live in Alaska, there's a lot of wilderness to explore—and a lot of environment to protect. Anchorage teacher **Lori Barnett** does both, while teaching ecology.

A longtime advocate for environmental protection, Barnett creates an outdoor classroom with field trips funded by a state forest service grant.

Last year, Barnett and her Ravenwood Elementary School students spent many hours on the vast Alaska Bureau of Land Management site on the Kenai Peninsula, south of Anchorage.

There the kids hiked through the forest, stopping to observe spruce beetle infestation and other problems. They learned about rotting logs and recycling, about soil resuscitation, and about forest products.

At Lowell Point, also on the site, the students conducted tide pool studies, testing the water for healthy and unhealthy organisms, and learning how water becomes polluted.

On field trips to a nearby lagoon, Barnett divided the class into groups. Each group selected one tree to study and followed its progression from early winter through spring.

"It's one thing for kids to learn about ecology in the classroom, but quite another thing for them to see the lessons firsthand," says Barnett. "The field trips really bring the lessons home to them.

"These youngsters are the future—they'll either work to save the earth or to destroy it."

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TFA113

BOOK BEAT

Kids' Books Come to the Small Screen

Through the wizardry of CD-ROM, children can now read and react to some of their favorite books on their home and school computer screens.

Marc Brown's **Arthur's Teacher Trouble.** Ages 3-8. English and Spanish. MAC and PC versions. Broderbund. $69.95 (school edition).

Mercer Mayer's **Just Grandma and Me.** Ages 6-10. English, Spanish, and Japanese. MAC and PC versions. Broderbund. $59.95 (school edition).

Beatrix Potter's **The Tale of Peter Rabbit.** Ages 3+. English and Spanish. PC/MAC (same disc). Discis. $59.95 (school edition).

Early CD-ROM discs were mostly used to store huge publications like encyclopedias. Now their vast storage capacity is used for graphics, animation, and voice.

CD-ROM books aren't merely read or browsed through. They're designed to be "played in" as well, thanks to interactive, multimedia technology.

"And the more interactive the program, the more kids like it," says Association member Linda Singer, an information system specialist with the Fairfax County, Virginia, public schools.

"It's not enough just to have the book on the screen, with the kids clicking with a computer mouse on the pages to turn them. They get bored with that after a while," Singer adds.

"In order to really involve children—and take full advantage of the technology," Singer concludes, "something else has to happen. In Broderbund's *Just Grandma and Me* , children click on a mailbox and something does happen: the door opens and a bird flies out."

Broderbund has taken the multimedia aspect of CD-ROM further than Discis, which doesn't automate its CD-ROM productions. Click with the mouse on the illustrations of Broderbund characters and they speak lines and move in ways that go beyond the printed text. Click on the many different objects in the illustrations—mailboxes, handbags, umbrellas, trees, food processors—and something interesting happens—usually funny—and with appropriate sound effects.

NEA member Linda Singer keeps up with CD-ROM technology.

CD-ROM—translating to "Compact Disc-Read Only Memory"—is the reason these media—voice, graphics, animation, music—can play together on screen. The CD-ROM disc—a stiff plastic disc just like a music CD—can hold more than 600 megabytes (MB) of data, the equivalent of 300,000 pages of text or 100 typical software programs.

In other CD-ROM applications, all that extra space is used to store huge amounts of data, including entire encyclopedias. But the electronic book publishers can use the added space for the graphics, animation, and voice that go together with text to make an interactive book.

Unless your school has one of the new all-in-one multimedia PCs ($1,500 and up), you'll have to add additional hardware to your regular PC to play CD-ROM discs. Packages of these components—CD-ROM drive (i.e., player), sound card (not necessary with Apple MacIntosh computers), and stereo speakers—cost $500 and up. For a little more, you can also get a variety of software titles.

According to Linda Singer, who last month began a regular column on K-12 CD-ROM software in the magazine *CD-ROM Professional,* lots of schools' PCs are too old to take CD-ROM components.

"The newest software titles need at least an IBM-compatible model 386 with Windows operating system or a Macintosh Plus or later model," Singer says.

Actually, Discis's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* will run on any Mac computer and on model 386 and later IBM compatibles. The two Broderbund discs reviewed here need at least a MAC LCII or an IBM-compatible 286 or higher. None of the three books requires Windows.

This review has perhaps stereotyped CD-ROM books as "infotainment"—read-along cartoons with a few educational features, such as the highlighting of text as it's read; or, in the Discis book, the identification in print and voice of items in the illustrations (e.g., shovels, birds) when they're clicked on.

But there's more to this new technology than this, the effects of which we can only guess at. Singer reports that nonfiction and encyclopedia CD-ROM discs can teach facts to kids who have difficulty learning from English-language print—the disabled, the non-English speaking—and she says it can make researchers out of kids who wouldn't touch the print version of *Reader's Guide.*

Then, if the new television-based games are an indication of where CD-ROM books are heading, new kinds of interactive stories for children and adults—perhaps with alternative story lines based on readers' choices—may be written especially for CD-ROM.

Warren Buckleitner, editor of the new *Children's Software Revue*, says, "By the year 2000 the four or five different CD formats we have now—some computer-based, some TV-based like Philips' CD-I, will be compatible. Teachers will be able to choose whether to show a CD-ROM story to a large group on the TV screen or to individual students at their desks."

Whether the content of these stories will be a net plus is another question. Perhaps the issue is: will electronic books displace something we have now? For the better? For the worse? Or will it be a wash? Stay interfaced.

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

Read On

To keep up with new CD-ROM products, read Linda Singer's "School for Thought" column in *CD-ROM Professional,* available at newsstands or by subscription (6 issues/$98) at 800/248-8466, or the new newsletter, *Children's Software Revue* (6 issues/$24), 520 N. Adams St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2482, 313/480-0040.

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3	***Creating Interactive Environments in the Secondary School,*** by Lois Stover, Gloria Neubert, and James Lawlor. (#3351-5-00-FB, $16.95) Involves you in an interactive process as you learn to create your own.
4	***At-Risk, Low Achieving Students in the Classroom,*** by Judy Brown Lehr and Hazel Wiggins Harris. (#3338-8-00-FB, $9.95) No miracles, but this book covers over 100 practical ideas for improvement.
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10	***Whole Language: Beliefs and Practices, K-8.*** Gary and Maryann Manning, eds. (#1482-0-00-FB, $16.95) A readable, all-in-one-place, whole language sourcebook for busy teachers.

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ASK DR. HACKER

Greg Jenson

Each month in this space, we'll run a sampling of questions from NEA members about technology. Our aim is to present a cross section of topics that reflect members' wide range of experience and expertise.

Q We'd like to buy software but worry that by the time we get it, the software will be obsolete. What kind of programs have staying power?

A Computer programs with real staying power are those that encourage the development of cognitive processes as well as the expansion of learning experiences. They should support the agenda for learning, contribute to skills in productivity, and enhance self-esteem, and can either be broad-based or cross-curricular in content. Programs like The Factory, Print Shop, and Children's Writing and Publishing have been around for a long time and are a few that meet these criteria.

Q What does CD-ROM mean and how does it enhance classroom instruction?

A CD-ROM stands for compact disc, read only memory. A single CD-ROM disc (the same size as a regular audio disc) can store and use huge quantities of information, including text, graphics and sounds. To access the information stored on these discs, you'll need a CD-ROM reader hooked to your computer. If you want sound with it, you'll need some kind of sound board hooked to both your PC and CD reader.

CD-ROM programs are now integrated into new multimedia packages with multiple interactive paths.

But choose carefully. There are many CD-ROM programs that lack appropriate instructional support materials. Choose programs that provide exciting and intellectually stimulating resources for students to access and research. (For details about interactive kids' books on CD-ROM, see Book Beat, page 27).

Q How can computers increase parental involvement?

A Computers are excellent tools for parental involvement. They give parents a chance to enrich their children's learning experience as well as their own. Parents can help students research information from databases, do problem solving activities, process written materials, use spell checker and Thesaurus, learn content and processes, and create graphics without being intimidated!

Q I have access to Internet through a local university and find the K-12 news areas very informative. Is there any way NEA might make this area available to all educators?

A Let's back up a minute and explain to the uninitiated what Internet is. It's an electronic information system that currently links about 15 million people internationally. Lots of people use the Net to chat about, well, almost anything—from work concerns to soccer scores.

Though most people use Internet as a sort of giant talking service, it actually offers a lot more than bulletin board service, including an array of library-type resources. Some see Internet as the model for the new electronic superhighway that's likely to emerge in the next decade (see page 3).

Now, through America Online, you too can chat on Internet by using the electronic mail system. America Online is adding capacity to do much more—soon. Watch for more information on this in future issues of *NEA Today*, other NEA publications, and NEA Online.

Q Can we network Macs using Appletalk connections? We have four Macs connected to a printer. Can we share programs among them, too?

A It's a yes and no answer. If your Macs are running System 7, it's easy. Sharing is built into system 7. Go to the Control Panel and open Sharing Setup. You will have two options—File Sharing and Program Linking.

If you want to share programs, test it before using it in a class. Localtalk (Appletalk) is a slow networking scheme. It's cheap and easy to use, but it works best sharing a printer like you're doing.

If you have older Macs using System 6, you have to share files by passing the disk. If you want to upgrade to System 7, you'll need at least 4 MB of RAM and System 7 for each in each machine.

Q Is there any research on the ideal student-computer ratio? If so what are the findings?

A There is probably much research, but the ideal depends on what you're doing with the computer. If you'd asked, "What's the best computer for my classroom?", we'd have the same answer: It depends.

One computer can be used with a classroom activity to help students think and organize their ideas. There are several excellent products that assist in that kind of activity. But if you're dealing with a writing class, one computer per student is the best ratio for the actual writing.

People are testing a great variety of setups. One school district in the Detroit area has installed six computers in every elementary classroom and a lab for each four classrooms. There's not much data yet on the success of the program.

But again, what really makes the difference is the software and what you want to accomplish with students. The computer only serves as the device that the software runs on.

Q I'm interested in linking with a classroom to share information about our communities. I am especially interested in a class that has local knowledge of the midwest flood. I'm a fifth grade teacher.

A You're already on NEA Online and NEA Online provides an excellent way to connect with colleagues across the country. You do face some difficulty in connecting. There was plenty of damage to schools and equipment. We don't know to what extent many of those schools are operational. All we can suggest is to keep trying to make the connection. We're sure they would like to hear from you and your class.

Q Is there a good way to manage access to the hard disk of a PC in my classroom lab? I want students to have access to certain programs, but I don't want them to erase the hard disk.

A Yes. There is software that will allow you to control access to the programs on your hard drive. Just look at any of the software catalogs, and you'll find an option.

There are also shareware and public domain software products that will help you protect your files and programs. Not all are perfect, but they can certainly help.

NEA Online Update

NEA has prepared an action plan to help NEA rural members who have to make a toll call to access NEA Online.

The plan is a step-by-step guide to help rural members fight for rate relief. Among the suggested ideas offered by the action plan:

➤ Contact Sprint (800-736-1130) and Tymnet (800-336-0149). These two companies handle the phone traffic for NEA Online, and can tell you if any new nodes (local connecting points) have been added to your local calling area.

➤ Call your local telephone company; some may be willing to adjust tariffs and reduce the toll charge.

➤ Mount a local campaign with other members who want NEA Online but can't get it without a toll charge.

The complete action plan is available through NEA Online or by writing to NEA Online, Action Plan, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

***Questions for Dr. Hacker are answered by the two NEA members at left. If you have a question for Dr. Hacker on any topic—from NEA Online to desktop publishing—write Dr. Hacker at NEA Center, 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, DC 20036, or use NEA Online. Just keyword* NEA Today.**

For details about getting on NEA Online, subscription costs, and more, please see page 18 of this issue.

Elementary science teacher Lyn Chan is project coordinator for TOPS (Technology Optimizes Performance in Science) at Skyline Elementary School in South San Francisco, California.

Chan was named a Christa McAuliffe Educator in 1988 by NEA's nonprofit foundation, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

Keith Zook is the technology coordinator for the Grosse Ile Township, Michigan schools. A veteran of over 30 years in the classroom, Zook has a special interest these days in using technology to help in school restructuring. He is a member of two statewide committees that bring together school administrators, business, and other groups interested in addressing technology issues.

RESOURCES

Free Or Inexpensive

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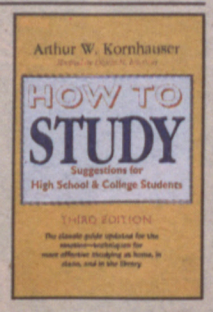
Safer Substitutes in Art. Center for Safety in the Arts. Four-color poster illustrates safe art materials and procedures that can be substituted for more hazardous ones in both elementary and secondary school art classes. 17"x 22". 1-10 copies, $5 each; 11-50, $4 each; 51-200, $3 each. Write for price for more than 200 copies. Prepay by check to Center for Safety in the Arts, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038.

STUDY GUIDE

How To Study: Suggestions for High School and College Students, Third Edition. Arthur W. Kornhauser, revised by Diane M. Enerson. A no-nonsense guide to effective studying of academic subjects. 58 pp. Paperback, $4.95. Order from booksellers or by mail from the University of Chicago Press (add $3 p&h), or call 800/621-2736.



The Survival Guide for Teenagers with LD. Rhoda Cummings and Gary Fisher. Shows learning disabled kids 13 and up how to deal successfully with school and studying. 192 pp. $11.95. From booksellers, trade wholesalers, or by mail from Free Spirit Publishing (add $4 p&h), 800/735-7323. An audio cassette version is also available for $19.95 (add $4 p&h); book and cassette together, $28.90 (add $4.75 p&h).

DISCIPLINE

Win-Win Discipline. Jack Blendinger and others. Presents principles for teacher-student interactions that help students learn self-discipline. 40 pp. $1.25. Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789. (Ask about quantity discounts.)

HOLIDAYS/MULTICULTURAL

Books for Special Days: Integrated Teaching of Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing, and Thinking. Joyce Armstrong Carroll. An activity resource book for more than 50 holidays, special days, and celebrations, including Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, and Cinco de Mayo. Jackdaws Series No. 4. 64 pp. $10 prepaid. Teacher Ideas Press/ Libraries Unlimited, P.O. Box 6633, Englewood, CO 80155-6633.

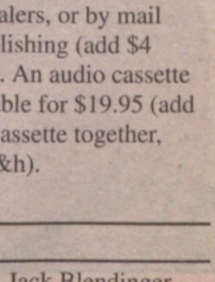
LITERATURE

301 Favorite Poems: Old and New. Ruth V. Groves. A veteran English teacher's selection of poems—by authors ranging from William Blake to Walt Whitman to Mark Strand—good for teaching students how to understand and enjoy the words of the bards. K-12. 322 pp. $14.50 plus $2 p&h. Ruth and Everett Groves, 834-16th St., Wilmette, IL 60091.

PEDAGOGY

Creating Interactive Environments in the Secondary School. Lois T. Stover and others. Actively involves readers in developing interactive teaching lessons for all areas of the secondary school curriculum. 104 pp. Stock No. 7502-8-10-FF. Special discount price of $10.95 until December 15, 1993. (Regular price, $16.95.)

Order from NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, 800/229-4200, FAX 203/933-5276.



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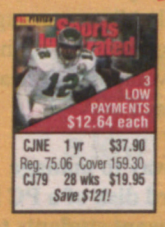

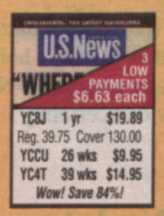

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Life - 10 mos	10	49D6	25.00	19.95	Teen	12	W9GH	15.95	12.95
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RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

I'll Fly Away—*PBS, Mondays, 8-9 p.m. ET.* This critically acclaimed series that puts faces to the struggle for civil rights in the Deep South returns to television.

Assignment Discovery: The New Immigrants—*The Discovery Channel, November 12, 9-10 a.m. ET.* Is America welcoming the newest wave of Asian, Hispanic, and Muslim immigrants—or greeting them with hostility? This program examines the tough issues that immigration raises.

Water: Thirsting for Tomorrow—*National Public Radio, November 13; check local listings for times.* As part of National Geography Awareness Week, NPR looks at the future of fresh water, traveling from the Egyptian desert to America's Great Lakes.

Roller Coaster!—*PBS, November 16, 8-9 p.m. ET.* This episode of NOVA features the hair-raising side of physics with its examination of the thrills and science of roller coasters.

Places People Live—*The Learning Channel, November 16; check local listings for time.* This program takes a look at the many types of dwellings people call home, including an Inuit igloo, a Costa Rican shanty, and the glass bubble in the Arizona desert called Biosphere II.

American Teacher Awards—*Disney Channel, November 19, 7 p.m. ET.* The fourth annual gala honoring the teaching profession. One of the 36 teachers honored will be named Outstanding Teacher of 1993.

The World of Plants—*The Learning Channel, November 23; check local listings for time.* This special series for elementary educators offers a variety of segments on plants—their habitats and origins, and their responses to light and human touch.

Sesame Street—*PBS, November 22-26; check local listings for times.* Sesame Street celebrates its 25th birthday by introducing new territory and new characters.

Zillions TV—*PBS, Thanksgiving; check local listings for time.* Based on the award-winning magazine *Zillions: Consumer Reports for Kids*, this half-hour special is designed to teach kids how to use math and science skills—and to become discriminating consumers.

Disney's Adventures in Wonderland—*Disney Channel; check local listings for dates and times.* Drawing from the fantasies of Lewis Carroll, this series combines puppetry, animation, and live-action to teach language arts skills.

These listings are provided by *KIDSNET*, a clearinghouse for children's television and radio in Washington, D.C.

Teacher TV

Don't forget to tune into *Teacher TV*, the weekly program coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel. *Teacher TV* airs Sunday evenings, 6-6:30 p.m. ET.

Here's a list of upcoming shows:

November 14—Restructured Schools: A Thorough Look

November 21—Higher Expectations: Foiling the Bell Curve

November 28—Violence in Schools: Solutions That Work

December 5—Integrating Technology: More than an Electronic Blackboard (NEW)

December 12—Setting Standards for Teachers.

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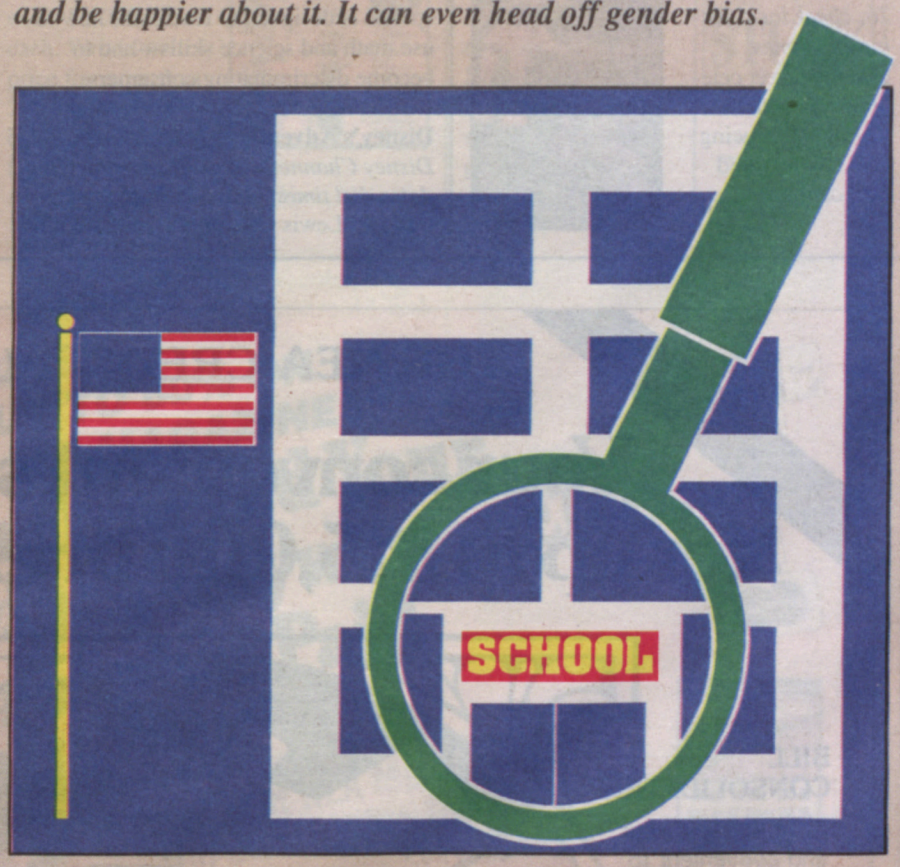
RESEARCH CLUES

Hands-On Teaches Best

Real-life instruction and assessment can make kids learn more and be happier about it. It can even head off gender bias.



Two studies support the common-sense—but hard to implement—notion that kids get more out of instruction and assessment if they have to use their hands to show what they understand.

Researcher Bridget Dalton, a lecturer at Harvard and project director at the Education Development Center, decided to see if girls would achieve as much as boys in science if they were given the same chance to manipulate materials and formulate hypotheses.

Dalton trained teachers in eight Boston-area fourth grade classrooms to use manipulatives to teach a six-week unit on electrical circuits. The students worked in same-sex pairs.

The result: both sexes showed equivalent growth (having started at the same level); both scored better on a performance assessment than on a questionnaire; the girls performed as well as the boys even on difficult concepts, such as parallel circuits; both sexes showed a wide range of mastery.

Best of all perhaps, "the girls didn't see circuitry as a 'boy thing,' " Dalton told *Report on Education Research.*

Similarly, preliminary results of a study done by the Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (read about its origins in Innovation, April 1992), showed that alternative assessments—that is, activities that require students to apply skills in real-life problem-solving situations—improve student learning and lead to better student attitudes toward school work.

In this project, 22 K-12 science and math teachers were paired and asked to design and carry out new ways of evaluating student competence and applications of knowledge.

When they did, they found that their students were more involved with their work, even putting in more time outside class to do it.

Perhaps no surprise—the teachers also reported that the changes in assessment caused them to change their own teaching methods. Their instruction became more integrated and less teacher-driven.

The VEA-Appalachia Lab study has already come up with two products based on the study; a third is under way:

➤ *Alternative Assessments in Math and Science: Moving Toward a Moving Target,* Order No. AL-493-NEA Appalachia Educational Laboratory, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325.

➤ *On Target with Authentic Assessment: Creating and Implementing Classroom Models.* This workshop package consists of a training manual organized into four modules. The modules contain all the materials—from background materials and transparency masters to activity instructions—necessary to present four half-day skill-building workshops or shorter awareness sessions. 650 pp. $50 prepaid.

Both are available prepaid from AEL, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325.

➤ *Alternative Assessment: Student-Driven Measures of Learning.* Two videotapes that show students in performance tasks. Available soon. To be notified, send SASE marked "Assessment Videos" to VEA- IPD, 116 S. Third St., Richmond, VA 23219.

—Nancy R. Needham

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A New Journal *Teaching and Change*

Here's a sparkling blend of restructuring research and classroom practice served with a twist: the writers are K-12 teachers. ***Teaching and Change***, co-published by the NEA Professional Library and Corwin Press, is a quarterly journal that offers an exciting and vital forum for reporting the experiences of classroom teachers as they learn how schools must change to make good, reflective practice possible and pervasive. Charter subscriptions are available for a limited time. The regular rate for a one-year individual subscription is $30.00. **NEA members save 10% and pay only $27.00.** Subscribe now to receive the Fall 1993 premiere issue hot off the presses! To take advantage of this special rate, send check, money order, Visa or MasterCard information to:

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INTERNATIONAL

RIGHTS WATCH

Kosovo

Since 1990, Serbian forces have cracked down on the two million residents of the autonomous province of Kosovo (formerly part of Yugoslavia), holding children hostage as they pursue their goal of "ethnic cleansing."

Nearly all of those living in Kosovo, mostly Albanians, have arbitrarily lost their jobs. Hundreds of thousands have been arrested, and many have been beaten and tortured.

Over the last three years, Serbian leaders have banned the Albanian language as the language of instruction and imposed a Serbian curriculum. When teachers refused to cooperate, discrimination and repression ensued. All pay to Albanian teachers was suspended; eventually, all Albanian schools were closed.

The ethnic Albanians, committed to nonviolent resistance, resolved to educate their children by establishing clandestine schools in private homes, warehouses, and empty buildings. In school year 1992-93, 340,000 students attended these make-shift schools, but 100,000 other Albanian children were without access to formal education.

As this school year began, Serbian police forces prevented 370,000 Albanian students and teachers from entering their schools. At nearly 100 school sites, teachers and students were arrested during violent encounters.

In July, an Education International (EI) delegation, headed by President Mary Hatwood Futrell and General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen, went to Kosovo and Belgrade to meet with trade union officials, teachers, children, and government officials.

Despite intervention from the EI and others, the conflict continues.

What You Can Do

Protest the repressive actions against children, teachers, and education by writing letters to Dr. Slavko Gordic, Federal Minister of Education, Bld. Lenina 2, 11070 New Belgrade, Serbia.

Resources from UNESCO

Available from UNIPUB, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706, 1-800-274-4888:

➤ Catalogue of UNESCO publications since 1980. Free.

➤ *Education for International Cooperation and Peace at the Primary Level.* $6.

➤ *Study Abroad, Volume 28, 1995-1997.* Listings for teachers and students who want to study abroad. Over 4,000 entries in more than 100 countries. $24.95.

Teachers Extend 'Hands Across the Water'

International teacher exchanges spark innovations in U.S. classrooms.

Educators are rarely typical tourists. They've got more questions, more interests, and more use for what they learn. After all, every experience finds its way back to the classroom.

Witness Cheri Johnson, a special education teacher in Roanoke, Virginia.

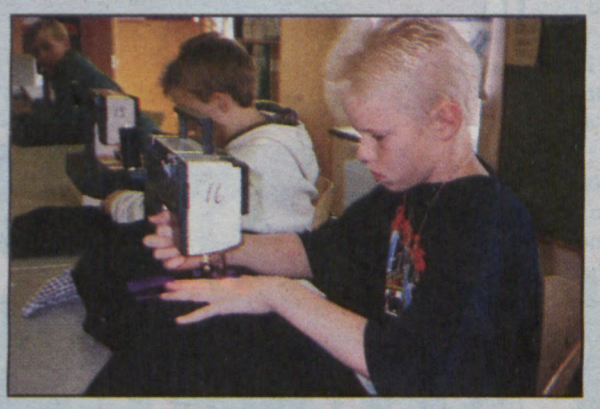
"I felt like a Viking on an adventure," Johnson says of her recent trip to Sweden. "I took away as many ideas as I could. Now I've come home to share my treasures and findings with America."

Cheri Johnson teaches a class in Jonkoping, Sweden, as part of the NEA-backed Hands Across the Water program.

Below: Swedish boys learn to use sewing machines, as required.

Johnson's "treasures" were uncovered with help from Hands Across the Water (HAW), an NEA-endorsed international teacher exchange program that facilitates travel to Russia, Sweden, Japan, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.

HAW began in October 1990 with 37 teachers from Southern New Jersey traveling to the Soviet Union. It's a program of the Educational Information & Resource Center, a public agency created in 1968 to serve the educational needs of schools and communities. Currently some 300 teachers have participated. There are openings for about 95 participants each year.



Exchange teachers spend two or three days in the arrival city (Moscow, Stockholm, Tokyo, Auckland, Amsterdam) for cultural and sightseeing activities. Then they travel to a small provincial city or town where they live and work with host teachers in a family setting for two weeks.

Host teachers supply food, accommodations, and local transportation. American participants spend a minimum of five full days in schools. Foreign teachers also participate in the exchange, living in the homes of their American partners and visiting their schools.

"I had a thousand questions to ask about Swedish education and culture," says Johnson, "and I got to sit down at my host family's kitchen table and ask them."

Beyond the visit with host families, Hands Across the Water encourages teachers to indulge their interests and to return home to teach all about them.

Even more important, what Johnson saw in Swedish schools influenced what she wanted to see in her own.

"There's a ripple effect to this program," sums up Johnson. With Hands Across the Water, "many people benefit from the experience of one school employee."

Hands Across the Water is now accepting applications for its 1994 programs, which are open to all teachers, school administrators, librarians, nurses, and guidance counselors. For information, contact: Hands Across the Water, 606 Delsea Dr., Sewell, NJ 08080. Fax 609/582-4206, phone 609/582-7000.

UNESCO: Key Player in International Education

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

"Defenses of peace" were in the minds of a conference of world leaders who placed these words in a Constitution in 1945 establishing UNESCO, the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO, the third largest specialized agency within the United Nations (UN) system, is an autonomous intergovernmental agency with its own constitution, budget, membership, and staff.

The goals of its founders were clear—"to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science, and culture..."

Today more than 170 nations, excluding the United States, are members of UNESCO. Through writings, research, publications, conferences, and assistance programs, UNESCO brings together governmental authorities, nongovernmental officials, and educators to advance education and the teaching profession worldwide.

The organization is governed by a General Conference of all member states, by an elected executive board, and by a secretariat based in Paris and headed by Director General Federico Mayor.

UNESCO is organized into five program areas.

➤ Education programs—approximately 40 percent of UNESCO's operating budget—include advocacy for universal primary education and adult literacy; training of educational planners, administrators, and teachers; education of disadvantaged groups; and research into fields such as drugs, population, and the environment.

➤ Natural science programs are designed to improve development and use of science and technology.

➤ Social and human science programs sponsor the study of development, economics, human rights, and peace.

➤ Culture programs promote the study of culture, restoration, and preservation of the world's cultural treasures, and cooperation in the fields of music and the arts.

➤ Communications programs advance the sharing of ideas internationally, the development of communication infrastructures, and the strengthening of communication capacities of developing countries.

This is the first of three articles on UNESCO. NEA's key role in the founding of UNESCO and events surrounding the United States' withdrawal from the organization will be covered later in this three-part series.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Is alternative medicine right for you?

One out of three American adults has tried some type of "unconventional" medical treatment.

Long a staple in many cultures, alternative medicine is the choice of a growing number of American health care consumers.

One out of three American adults has tried some type of "unconventional" medical treatment, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported earlier this year. And the number of visits to providers of unconventional therapy was found to be greater than the number of visits to all primary care physicians nationwide.

What's behind this growing revolution in health care? A number of factors, including skyrocketing costs for conventional treatment, a desire for a more holistic approach to treatment, and a need to find long-range solutions to many chronic conditions, such as back pain, sinusitis and headache.

While several alternative treatments are well known—many with roots in ancient cultures—others are less so and may even be hazardous to your health.

As the interest in and use of alternative medicine continues to grow, consumers will need to become savvy shoppers to distinguish between safe and healing treatments—and those that are fraudulent, or worse, dangerous.

What types of treatemnt are classified as alternative medicine?

While there's no single recognized system of classification for alternative medicine, the majority of therapies can be divided into four general categories.

➤ *Treatment with physical forces and devices.* Practitioners include chiropractors, bodyworks practitioners, and acupuncturists.

➤ *Spiritual and psychological therapies.* Practitioners include those who use mental imagery techniques and hypnosis as well as psychics, mystics, and others who engage in paranormal health remedies and divinations.

➤ *Nutritional therapies.* Treatments include herbal, vitamin, and mineral dietary supplements, and specific regimens, such as a macrobiotic diet.

➤ *Drug and biologic treatment.* Practitioners, including homeopathic physicians, prescribe treatments including drugs, chemicals, and serums.

When should I consider alternative medical treatment?

Most experts from both traditional and alternative medicine agree that nontraditional treatment should be viewed as a complement to conventional medical treatment, rather than a replacement for it. This is particularly true in emergency situations, such as those involving broken bones, chest pains, high fevers, or excessive bleeding.

Today, alternative medical therapy is used primarily by people with chronic health problems that don't respond to conventional medical treatment and by those who use it as a method of preventive health care.

Marc Stern, spokesperson for the National Institute of Health's Office of Alternative Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, recommends that "anyone considering alternative medical treatment should do so in consultation with their regular physician, who can advise them on both conventional and unconventional medical therapies."

What alternative treatments might be best for me?

That depends on your symptoms.

Chiropractors generally see people with back pain that hasn't responded to traditional measures. After taking x-rays, chiropractors manipulate the vertebrae to clear what they contend are blockages and restore normal nerve transmission. Many chiropractors will also recommend strengthening exercises and/or heat treatment to help relieve the pain.

To relieve muscle and joint pain, improve circulation, and reduce stress, increasing numbers of people are choosing one of dozens of kinds of massage therapy.

To get or stay healthy, many Americans are focusing on the connection between psychological and physical health. Ayurveda, an ancient philosophy and practice from India, stresses the need for harmony between the human body and nature. When a condition is diagnosed, Ayurvedic practitioners use a variety of methods to treat it, including yoga, meditation, changes in diet, and herbal prescriptions.

Still other consumers of alternative medicine look to homeopaths. Homeopathic practitioners—including approximately 1,500 physicians, dentists, naturopaths, chiropractors, and veterinarians—report success treating headaches, allergies, and other conditions.

Based on the theory that "like cures like," homeopathic doctors prescribe minute quantities of drugs that would normally cause the same symptoms that the person is experiencing. However, the quantities are so small, they are generally recognized as safe.

Although homeopathy was developed in the early 19th century, its use remains controversial since there is no scientific proof that it works.

How can I find a reputable practitioner?

Get a recommendation—preferably from your primary care physician. If that's not possible, get recommendations from friends and other patients who've used alternative treatments.

Or look to a professional organization for help in determining a practitioner's qualifications (see box). Not all alternative health care practitioners are required to be licensed. And, even when licenses are required, requirements vary.

Will insurance cover the treatments?

That depends on several factors, including the reason for the visit, the state in which you live, and your own individual insurance policy. Because there is so much variation, it's important to check with your insurer before visiting an alternative health care practitioner.

How can I protect myself against fraudulent practices?

In many instances, alternative therapies may be as good as conventional therapies and less expensive, but they lack a scientific base.

Recently, however, NIH's new Office of Alternative Medicine granted awards to 20 alternative health care practitioners to conduct clinical studies to determine the merit of their treatment methods.

Proponents of alternative medicine hope the studies will be the start of a movement to put alternative medicine in the mainstream of medical practice.

FYI...

The following are the names and addresses of a few organizations specializing in or licensing alternative health care practitioners.

American Chiropractic Association
1701 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22209

American Holistic Medical Association
4101 Lake Boone Trail, Suite 201
Raleigh, NC 27607

American Massage Therapy Association
1130 W. North Shore Ave.
Chicago, IL 60626

American Oriental Bodywork Association
50 Maple Place
Manhasset, NY 11030-1927

Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy of the USA (Ayurveda)
RR1, Box 400
Honesdale, PA 18431

National Center for Homeopathy
801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 306
Alexandria, VA 22314

PENSION RAIDING

Cause For Concern

As states face more and more financial problems, rumors—and facts—abound about using tomorrow's pension funds to pay today's bills.

The term is "pension raiding." And it's scary. As cash-starved states look for ways to solve immediate cash flow problems, public employees worry that their pension money will go to pay today's bills.

But pension consultants say there's little danger that public employees, including teachers in state retirement systems, will be unable to collect their pensions come retirement time. In fact, Al Pike, a consultant in the Washington, D.C., office of Foster Higgins, a benefits consulting firm, feels that public pensions are in much better shape today than they were a decade ago.

Other experts agree. "When public employees reach retirement, they have a binding agreement with the state," says Mike Butler, benefits consultant in the Rowayton, Connecticut, office of Hewitt Associates. "They'll get the money."

The danger, experts say, is a more subtle one. Many states are doing things that are likely to reduce the amount of money in state pension funds. That, in turn, will increase the burden on taxpayers, who may decide they don't want to spend so much money on schools and other public services.

"Perhaps you can feel comforted that even if the funding is being mishandled, you won't be personally affected," Butler says. "But the reality is that taxpayer money will have to make up the shortfall.

"As taxpayers are squeezed to make up for this mismanagement, they'll create taxpayer resistance to staffing levels. What might suffer is next year's wage increase."

First, a little bit of background on how state pensions work and how they differ from private sector pensions. Corporations are required by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to set aside money today to pay for future pension plan benefits. Whether states are required to do this is determined by each state's legislature.

As recently as 15 years ago, most states did not set aside money, notes Tim Barron, a consultant in the Cleveland office of Wyatt Asset Services, a subsidiary of the benefit consulting firm Wyatt Company.

"A lot of states adopted the pay-as-you-go method, paying benefits to each generation of retirees as they became due," explains Barron. That meant that today's taxpayers paid for the previous generation's retirement.

Gradually, that practice began to change, partly as a result of ERISA and partly for philosophical reasons.

"There was a recognition that the current generation of taxpayers should pay for their own benefits," Barron says. So many states set up rules that required future funding of pension liabilities. Still, when things got tight, it was easy enough for state legislatures to change the law to skip one year's funding.

Consultants say that two other problems are more common than simply not funding the pension liabilities. The first is changing the interest rate assumptions so that the state can contribute less.

Here's how that works: Each year, an actuary looks at the plan, including the current number of employees, their ages, and when they'll retire. He or she estimates how long they'll live and how much money will be needed to provide their benefits. Then the actuary looks at the pension fund and assumes that it will earn a specific rate of interest.

The actuary might assume, for example, that the fund will earn 6, 8, or 10 percent interest. The higher the interest assumed, the less the state will have to contribute to meet future benefit obligations.

"What we've seen happen in the last several years is that the actuarial interest rate assumptions state legislatures or retirement boards use have increased—and that results in decreased contributions," says Barron. He estimates that 40 of the 50 states have increased their interest rate assumptions over the past two or three years, even though interest rates have been heading down.

"Ultimately, if you don't earn the interest rate you assumed, what you've really been doing is borrowing from the fund," he adds. Most experts don't believe that this is sound policy.

"If a state has to go to a referendum to borrow money, so be it," Barron says. "That's better than changing the actuarial assumption of the pension fund so that no one knows what's going on."

The second problem area is that some states believe pension money should be used to do public good, such as be lent to developing businesses. At first blush, this might seem like a sound plan. The flaw in the reasoning is that the fund may earn much less money than it would by investing in stocks and bonds.

For example, if a multibillion-dollar pension fund earns three percent—rather than 8 percent—over a period of 20 years, it means a difference of millions of dollars. The result, again, is that the state government is borrowing from the pension fund.

Butler points out that even if states use poor judgment in managing pension money, that won't affect eventual benefits. It will just mean that taxpayers will have to pony up the shortfall.

One example: Wyatt's Tim Barron was chief investment officer for Virginia's state pension system from 1985 to 1991. During that time, he was approached by the state and asked for a loan of $11 billion dollars to build empty warehouses in disadvantaged areas to allow developers to see the potential of these locations and build their own business outlets.

It was a fine idea. But the state had no plan to buy back the warehouses so that the pension system would even retrieve its money, much less earn a profit. Letting emotions guide decisions, Barron says, is the largest problem for pension systems.

Experts say public employees shouldn't be alarmed about their own future benefits. But they should be aware that states may be tinkering with pension funds in a way that may hurt the future of education and other public services. And they should let legislators know they want their pensions protected.

—Mary Rowland

A variety of member benefits are available to NEA-R members through NEA-Retired and NEA Member Benefits. For more information on NEA Member Benefit programs, call toll free 800/637-4646.

SOUNDING BOARD

BANNED In Billings

By Kathy Carlson

Banned in Billings. That's a phrase I never thought I'd be repeating. Yet, I've said it dozens of times since last spring when Billings public schools voted to restrict students' access to the fairy tale *King Stork* written by Howard Pyle in the late 1800s and re-illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman in 1973.

Though parents objected to the book for reasons ranging from too much violence to references to the "smell of Christian blood," the most serious objections seemed to stem from the illustrations of the princess wearing "revealing" clothing. The objectors said they wanted books that promoted the traditional values shared by the majority of Billings' citizens.

Frustrated by an unfair hearing process that immobilized anyone opposed to restricting the book, I exhausted every avenue of recourse available. Spare moments became an opportunity for me to make phone calls or write letters to both national and local groups opposed to censorship.

Finally, when there was no one else to turn to, I wrote to the illustrator of *King Stork*, Trina Schart Hyman. I'd hoped for mild interest from her; I was astounded to find an ally and a supporter.

The following excerpts from our letters to one another give you an inside view of what it's like to "walk through fire" to preserve the freedom to read.

April 23, 1993

Dear Ms. Hyman:

The elementary school library where I work is currently embroiled in a controversy with the school district and the community concerning a book you have illustrated called *King Stork*.

In December, I read *King Stork* to several classes of first graders as part of a fairy tale unit. In January, one of the first grade students checked it out. The parents objected and began our district's reconsideration procedure. A committee recommended that the book have a label saying that the material in *King Stork* might be offensive to some readers.

They also recommended that it not be read to K-3 students. The parents wanted the book moved to a high school and appealed the decision to the school board. It is now in the school board's hands. They must make a decision within 30 days; they plan to meet on May 10.

May 3, 1993

Dear Kathy,

Your letter concerning the controversy in your school district over *King Stork* reached me just yesterday. I am sorry that the book has caused trouble for you, and I hope that perhaps some of what I say in this letter will help to clear the air.

First of all, I should state that it was never my intention, while working on this book, to create pictures that were in any way lewd, lascivious, titillating, disturbing, upsetting, controversial—or that would "create a ruckus," or shock or dismay.

I am a children's book illustrator, and a big part of my job is to make pictures that are beautiful, exciting, enchanting, and true to the story—pictures that will get kids interested and make them want to read. Period.

I do not believe that there is anything in any of my illustrations—for *King Stork* or any of the more than 150 other books I have illustrated—that would frighten or harm children in any way.

You can't hide things from children—they're smarter than that; they know better, and so should we. I hope your school board won't start hiding books from children. There are good books and there are bad ones, and plenty of mediocre ones in between, and kids have to start somewhere to learn how to make their own choices and decisions. I honestly believe that *King Stork* deserves to be among those choices.

May 10, 1993

Dear Trina,

The final decision was made on *King Stork*.

The second hearing was just like the first—only the objectors and the principal could speak. Supporters of the book were not allowed to speak. Democracy's great, ain't it? Now, in order to read *King Stork*, kids have to have a letter from their parents. It's censored.

May 17, 1993

Dear Trina,

Tonight I spoke at the board's "Call to the Public" about their horrible hearing process and their lack of understanding about censorship. The elation I felt from your call Sunday night and the *Gazette* editorial Monday fizzled some time after that. The board members sat there stony-faced with not one iota of emotion showing through.

It's great that you decided to focus your talk to the Vermont librarians on this issue. I hope they understood better than my colleagues here.

June 3, 1993

Dear Kathy,

You would have been encouraged—and proud—if you'd been here to see and hear the response from the Vermont librarians when I read both your letters at the end of my presentation. There was stunned silence, then a sort of collective disbelieving sigh. Then, when I told them I'd spoken to you on the phone and you were going to take it to the ACLU, the entire audience (about 500 people) rose to give a standing ovation!

June 7, 1993

Dear Trina,

I cry a lot lately. Last week I finished reading *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom* to my fourth graders, and I cried then, too. I actually had to have a student read for me because I kept getting choked up.

One of the hardest lessons in life (I'm beginning to learn) is that even when you believe that your cause is just and right, not everyone will agree, and there's nothing you can do to make them change their minds. You keep telling them that they just don't understand, and they keep replying that they understand, they just disagree.

June 17, 1993

Dear Kathy,

Your tears are easy to figure out—for me, anyway. Mostly it's because your faith in the way things are—or are supposed to be—has been shattered. You've been attacked by people you had every reason to trust, simply for doing your job (and doing it well) and for doing what we've always been taught was the right thing to do. For behaving in a moral way, your morals have been questioned.

August 12, 1993

Dear Trina,

The grim truth about all of this is that despite having done everything we could (you included), *King Stork* is dead. I'd like to believe that it wasn't all in vain, and that perhaps we raised enough of a stink about the issue to make a difference should this happen again.

I know how much fear this has created for the education community. Self-censorship will be rampant. Teachers and librarians have seen how much they have to go through to defend their desire for academic freedom, and they will stick with the safe and mediocre choices. That, to me, is the most dangerous and damaging result.

The battle over *King Stork* has ended, but the war against censorship continues in Billings and across the country. While the Billings school district needs to change its policy to include public input and a fair hearing process, citizens everywhere must get involved in protecting the freedom to read.

Together we have to preserve the creative freedom of artists like Trina Schart Hyman who, because of pressure from special interest groups, find their work censored by editors before we even have the chance to see it for ourselves.

At a time when our children need to learn to think for themselves, we do no good by offering them bland reading stripped of controversy.

Kathy Carlson is a library-media specialist at Sandstone Elementary School and second vice-president of the Billings (Montana) Education Association.

Your NEA

Q & A

Debits and Credits

What is the NEA budget for '93-94?
NEA estimates income of $173,206,000, and expenses of $171,473,940. That leaves a one percent contingency of $1,732,060, as currently required by NEA bylaws. The estimated dues income for 1993-94 is based on an expected membership of more than 2,150,000.

Who determines how the money is spent?
NEA members from all over the country are involved in developing budget plans. The NEA Budget Committee—chaired this year by NEA Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Monahan—also includes NEA Vice-President Bob Chase and five representatives from the NEA Board of Directors. The committee meets six times a year to review budget proposals.

In addition, the committee holds openhearings at conferences around the country to solicit members' opinions on how their dues dollars should be spent.

How does the Budget Committee make decisions?
The committee uses the NEA "strategic plan," which lays out all of NEA's organizational goals, in the development of the Association's budget. Following the strategic plan ensures that program goals are adequately reflected in the way dues dollars are spent.

All recommended programs are analyzed in relation to whether they correspond, directly or indirectly, to the achievement of one or more of NEA's strategic objectives. For instance, 23 cents of each dues dollar is allocated for "strategic objective 3," which, in 1993-94, calls for NEA to "achieve a pluralistic work force and advance the economic interests, protect the job security, and improve the...conditions of employment for all education employees."

Who has the final budget say?
The 160 members of the NEA Board of Directors cast a preliminary vote on the budget each spring, but your representatives at the NEA Representative Assembly each July make the decision on the final budget proposal.

Can I get a copy of the budget?
Yes. All delegates to the NEA RA receive a copy of the budget. You can get a copy by calling one of your representatives or your local UniServ office. In addition, *NEA Today* publishes the NEA Secretary-Treasurer's audited report on the state of NEA's finances in the February issue each year.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

NEA Takes Stand on National Standards

Ever since all 50 governors agreed to a set of six national education goals in 1989, there's been a call from all corners of the education world to set national standards for student achievement.

At presstime, the Clinton Administration's proposal for federal action on the education goals—Goals 2000: Educate America Act—awaited action in the House and Senate. NEA backs the Clinton bill, which would establish voluntary national standards for content, student performance, and program quality.

It's that last item—program quality—that's got NEA members concerned. It's fine to set standards for what students should learn, NEA Vice-President Bob Chase told the nation's governors last spring, but you've got to make sure all students have the help they need to reach those standards.

Put simply, equal educational opportunity has got to be more than empty rhetoric. Once you set national standards for student achievement, you also need to set what NEA calls "opportunity to learn standards."

To meet opportunity to learn standards, NEA believes all schools must have basic elements in place: qualified staff, manageable class sizes, course diversity, well-stocked libraries, computers, counselors and health care professionals, adequate facilities and safe grounds, and the resources to meet the needs of special needs students.

As Chase emphasized to the governors, "Properly used, opportunity to learn standards should provide guidance to policymakers and a yardstick to parents and other public school advocates about what each school needs and what priorities ought to be."

IN HISTORY

At the 1977 Representative Assembly in Minneapolis, NEA completed 13 years of intensive effort to end racially separate teacher organizations in the South.

Louisiana teachers voted to merge their separate organizations in December, 1977. And Mississippi teachers merged dual affiliates in the summer of 1976. The two states were the last of 11 to consolidate following a merger agreement between the American Teachers Association and the NEA 10 years earlier.

At the opening of NEA's 115th Annual Meeting in 1977, President John Ryor called the completion of the merger "testimony to the strength and vitality of [the Representative Assembly], and to the courage and foresight of the men and women who make up our professional Association. It further demonstrates our commitment to the improvement of education for the children of America."

WORKING FOR YOU

NEA's Master Scheduler

Joe Di Dio

Some weeks, NEA's officers get more than 100 invitations to represent Association members at events all over the U.S.

Striking members in Youngstown, Ohio, need an officer on hand to help build community support, or the Education International calls on NEA as its largest American affiliate to attend an important meeting in Brussels, or the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards holds a meeting in Denver. How do you make sure leaders get to the right places at the right times?

Felicia Haynes is the NEA staffer who works full time making travel arrangements for the NEA officers, executive director, and the six Executive Committee members.

Invitations from state and local Association affiliates make up a large percentage of requests—and receive top priority over those from outside organizations. To meet the demand, Haynes estimates that all three NEA officers spend 70 percent of their time on the road.

When the officers are in danger of getting overbooked, which is most of the time, Haynes works to iron out conflicts. Often, success depends on meshing one trip with another. For example, Geiger was scheduled to attend the California Teachers Association State Council meeting in Burlingame, California, in November. Haynes arranged for a stopover in St. Louis, Missouri, for the National Council of Urban Education Associations meeting there. The need for that kind of coordination keeps her work a challenge, says Haynes.

SHORT TAKES

Videos Available. The NEA Video Library offers a host of useful VHS videotapes. Among them:

➤ *Writing for Grants.* This 23-minute video teaches the basic steps necessary to write successful grant applications. It looks at how to find funding sources and details key elements in developing a successful budget. Stock number A050-10061.

➤ *Dropout Prevention—A Blueprint for Success.* The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education and NEA have joined forces to produce this 15-minute video outlining the features of successful dropout prevention programs. Stock number A050-10118.

➤ *Sexual Harassment.* This 15-minute video looks at how to protect members from sexual harassment on the job and inform them of their rights and responsibilities. Stock number A050-10101.

➤ *Questions to Grow On.* This 27-minute video produced by the NEA National Center for Innovation features a panel of classroom practitioners raising critical questions about today's schools. Stock number A050-10119.

➤ *Site-Based Decision Making.* This 47-minute tape reviews how site-based decision making should work, its pitfalls and how it can change local Associations. Stock number A050-10106.

To order a video, send a $15 check payable to NEA to: NEA Video Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. Credit card orders accepted by phone: 203/934-2669.

Letters

Reality Check

I have a suggestion for the teachers quoted in the article "It's About Time!" (Cover Story, September) who are advocating 12-month contracts for teachers. They should go to their district payroll offices and set up the necessary withholding for a deferred salary option. (Most districts now offer a 12-paycheck plan.)

Then they would have the peace of mind of knowing they'd be getting a check in July and August, and could relax and enjoy their summers. It sounds as though these teachers, in particular, could benefit from a break—and a reality check.

Did I hear somebody say that all they'd be doing is spreading the same dollar amount over 12 paychecks instead of 10? Precisely. But in all likelihood that's exactly the same way the state would pay us if—God forbid!—12-month contracts for teachers ever became a reality.

Even if there were a salary increase, it wouldn't be worth it because there would be much too great a price to pay. Money never comes without strings attached, and you can be certain we would have additional tasks imposed upon us. More important, we would lose the freedom and flexibility to spend our summers as we choose.

No, thank you. The gift of time is much too precious to jeopardize.

We need to oppose this frightening scenario before it gains enough momentum to become trendy or politically correct. If it reaches that point, there's a very real danger that we could someday see it forced upon us.

Don't let the workaholics among us mess things up for the rest of us. Write in, call, fax in, and give our NEA policy makers the message loud and clear. Just say no to 12-month contractual obligations.

Amy Jordan
San Clemente, California

Stealth Motive?

I'm writing about the article, "Far Right Targets School Boards," (Human Rights, September). I know if it were far left this article would have a completely different slant. Don't "righters" have the right to do what lefters have done for years?

I wonder if perhaps you are more upset that these people have diametrically opposed views to yours than that they are using what appear to be stealth tactics to get their hidden agendas taken care of.

Jane Hart
Mansfield, Texas

Beginner's Bucks

You recently printed that the average salary in Hawaii is $36,000. I have been here a year and only make $26,000, a difference of $10,000. I feel you are doing a great injustice by printing average salaries.

My pay after taxes and health insurance is $1,400 a month. My rent is $900 and food is about $300. After a hair cut, dog food, and the phone bill, I'm lucky to have $50 or $100. I don't have a car, new clothes, or any furniture. Boy, it sure is good to have a dream of a $10,000 raise.

Next time, print base salaries with teachers as the source, not the state. You would keep hard working people from being bitterly disappointed.

Thomas Clarke
Waipahu, Hawaii

Find the Cure

I am a breast cancer survivor. My cancer was not discovered by a mammogram. I would like to see NEA put money and attention toward finding a cure for breast cancer, not just toward alerting women teachers about the need for mammograms.

Why not show the President we helped to elect that a cure for breast cancer is one of our top priorities? Perhaps the NEA could contact the National Breast Cancer Coalition at P.O. Box 6673, Washington, D.C. 20035, and get involved in a petition to Mr. Clinton.

Roseann Drydale
Bad Kreuznach, Germany

I was outraged to see misinformation about breast cancer in the September issue. The bold typed headlines read "Doctor to Teachers... Prevention Works." At this time, we don't know how to prevent or cure breast cancer and we don't know its cause.

Early detection is the best the medical community can offer to women at this time. That's why breast cancer activists have become vocal in seeking more funding for this devastating disease that strikes one in eight women and a disproportionate number of teachers.

The article states that Dr. Paul Seligman studied 10 preventable causes of death including breast cancer. Risk factors for breast cancer are then identified as age, family history, and previous breast cancer. Clearly behaviors can't change these factors.

Certainly lung cancer and heart disease can be affected by smoking, diet, and life style, but this is not the case for breast cancer. Thus the breast cancer exam, mammograms, and annual check ups are very important methods for early diagnosis while we wait to learn how to prevent breast cancer.

Arlene Hodgman
LaGrange, Illinois

Editor's Note: The small headline should have read: "Doctor to Teachers...Early Detection Works."

I retired in June after 34 years of teaching—three in the classroom, the remainder in an elementary school library. Returning from a trip on August 19, I felt pain in my breast that would not go away. I discovered a lump. From a biopsy, doctors found a malignant tumor almost two inches long.

What is frightening is that this type of tumor does not show up in a mammogram. Also, there is a good chance that it will mirror itself in the other breast. I'm scheduled for a double mastectomy this fall. What a way to start retirement.

Needless to say, I'm happy to hear that NEA's Health Information Network is launching an early detection campaign.

Ruth Huber
Portland, Oregon

Learning Channel

However unintentionally, your profile of John Hendricks (Meet, September) leaves those who don't otherwise know with the impression that The Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel are parts of, or interchangeable names for, a single cable channel. Those of us in the Waterville, Maine, area know all too well that such is not the case.

Despite repeated requests, our cable company has declined to carry The Learning Channel. One person was told by a cable company representative that they had no intention of ever carrying TLC.

Please clarify for your readers that TDC and TLC are separate channels. Best of luck to those in other areas who try to persuade their cable operators to squeeze these channels in, even at the expense of losing a shopping, movie, or sports channel.

Kristine Arntsen
Waterville, Maine

Editor's Note: You are correct. The Learning Channel, which cosponsors Teacher TV *with NEA, is separate from the The Discovery Channel, though they have the same owner. NEA members in several parts of the country have spearheaded campaigns to convince local cable operators to carry the Learning Channel. If you'd like to know how to mount your own effort, call 1-800/443-1212.*

Freedom Defined

I feel the viewpoint expressed in a letter to the editor concerning the rights of student journalists under the First Amendment is out of touch with reality. (Letters, September).

A writer or editor has a right to have his views put into print only if they agree with the views of the publisher. If there is a conflict, the only recourse for the writer is to find another job. Freedom of the press isn't freedom to write what you please; it's freedom to publish what you please.

In a school situation, the school is the publisher, and the student journalist must comply with the school's editorial policy.

Donald Bamberger
Port Washington, Wisconsin

Parental Choice

Congratulations on publishing a cartoon that tells the truth (Washington Watch, September). The cartoonist is absolutely right: if parents have a choice, they will send their children to private schools. Now ask yourselves why.

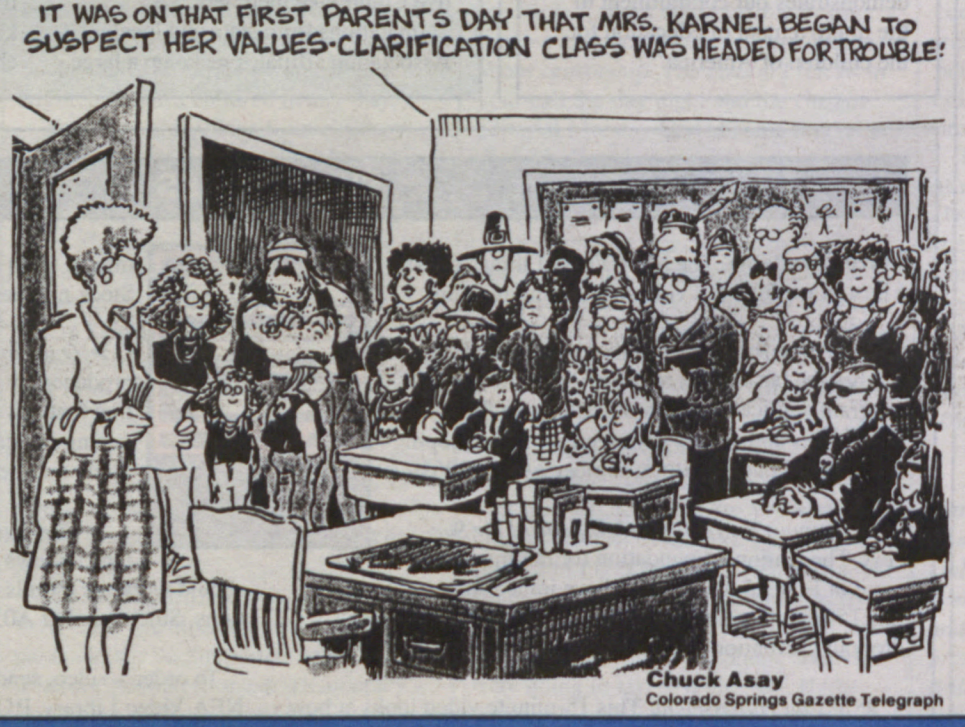
Dorothy Diegel
Springfield, Ohio

Nurse Says No

I'm a school nurse and I say "No!" to distributing condoms to students (Debate, October). Our students have access to a family planning clinic that will give them a free exam, free counseling, and free birth control devices. Let the schools stick to education.

We should be encouraging high moral standards for our students, not aiding their decline into promiscuity. I'm glad my own children weren't exposed to school personnel handing out condoms under the guise of promoting good health.

Barbara Lagoon
Springdale, Pennsylvania


IT WAS ON THAT FIRST PARENTS DAY THAT MRS. KARNEL BEGAN TO SUSPECT HER VALUES-CLARIFICATION CLASS WAS HEADED FOR TROUBLE!
Chuck Asay
Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph

NEA Today invites your comments.

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➤ By NEA Online: Sign on to NEA Online and keyword to *NEA Today*. Details on page 18.

Debate

Can kids "Irn tu spel" by misspelling?

YES

Lynne Kelly is a third grade teacher at Richland School, Quakertown, Pennsylvania, and a past president of the Quakertown Community Education Association. Kelly is also active in her state Association, serving as chair of the women's caucus, among other positions.

Elizabeth Sheridan-Regan is the resource room teacher at Maple Hill Elementary School, Naugatuck, Connecticut, and a former vice-president of the Naugatuck Teachers League. She currently serves her local Association as a building rep and public relations committee chair.

NO

Have you ever said to your students, "Don't worry about the spelling. Sound out the words the best you can. I want to know what you think and how you feel?" Or, "Write what you want to tell us before you forget your ideas. When you're finished, we'll use a dictionary, correct the spelling, and work out the punctuation?"

If you've done this, you've used "invented" spelling. Invented spelling isn't new. As a matter of fact, it's the way I was taught to teach writing in undergraduate school!

I use invented spelling because I believe spelling is developmental, just as spoken language is. When infants make their first attempt at speech by saying, "ma...ma" or "da...da," the parents reward them positively. They reinforce the oral behavior, and the infants repeat it. But they don't stay at the "ma...ma" level forever. As time unfolds, children develop fluent language.

Spelling unfolds similarly. First we teach consonant sounds, then vowels—a few at a time. Over time, with practice reading words and writing them, high teacher expectations, and a real audience for a piece of writing, the child learns to spell correctly.

Invented spelling is effective when used in conjunction with "process" writing or the whole language approach because it doesn't slow kids' thought processes. Stopping to correct spelling then starting again are obstacles to clear writing.

I believe also that invented spelling is an invaluable tool for advancing the development of higher-level thinking skills. Using it, students can express their thoughts rather than be handicapped by the need to spell words correctly. I know it's difficult for students to write and think about syntax simultaneously.

Can I find empirical support for my belief in inventive spelling? I know that my third graders this year have used invented spelling since kindergarten, so I look to their work for evidence.

We've been in school only eight days, but I have numerous samples of written work. My class of 30 children is inclusive. There are 14 Chapter 1 children, five identified as emotionally disturbed, and a few with speech and language impairments.

I search for evidence of spelling difficulties. With this ability range, I figure I've stacked the deck against inventive spelling.

My expectations are low, but the results amaze me! The students impress me with their skills and writing ability. Using their writing as evidence for authentic assessment of skills, I discover they require help with punctuation and grammar.

But I struggle to find weaknesses in spelling. The number of errors is incredibly minute. The writing samples support my beliefs about invented spelling!

Witness the results yourself:

My Dog

My dog is a husky. She is black and white. She pulls sleds. Her name is Sheba. She loves to swim. She loves walks. She likes to play. She is noisey. My Dog has a plastic hip.

Sharks

Sharks are big. There are many kinds of sharks. I'll name a couple the bullshark, tiger shark, Great white, sand shark, and the hammerhead. But the biggest of them all is the whale shark. Sharks are very forocious.

I'll say one thing. I don't believe the boy who wrote about sharks would even have tried to write "ferocious" without invented spelling. It would have seemed too hard. So, should we use invented spelling or shouldn't we?

Actually, I think there are other questions that are more significant: What do we as educators truly value? Are higher-level thinking skills a top priority? Should we develop problem solvers, decision makers, and divergent thinkers?

Should our students know where to find answers, or do we expect them to know all the answers?

Answer those questions sensibly and you'll be a supporter of invented spelling, too.

Teaching inventive spelling to budding writers without giving them the benefit of an organized spelling program may make it difficult—even impossible—for some students to make the transition to formal spelling rules.

In today's heterogeneous classrooms, inventive spelling could do a disservice to students with specific learning disabilities, "inclusion" students, and students whose learning styles require them to use specific techniques to develop spelling skills.

The most often quoted rationale for using inventive spelling is the freedom young students gain in being able to express themselves without being inhibited by their lack of spelling ability.

"Process writing," with which inventive spelling is often linked, is widely used, even in first grade classrooms, to get around this potential stumbling block. Students are taught to create rough drafts or "sloppy copies." At this first step, they're told, inventive spelling is acceptable, because the next step will be to edit the work.

But the process of developing successful learning and work habits should start when students begin expressing themselves on paper.

I'm concerned about the growing number of mainstreamed students who are ready to learn, who are looking for guidelines or rules that will allow them to be as successful as their peers, but who may be "put on hold" when they're encouraged to use inventive spelling.

As a resource room teacher, I have some specific concerns. Will primary classroom teachers recognize students with potential difficulties in sound-symbol discrimination and memory if their students are using inventive spelling?

Will these teachers be able to recognize a pattern of errors that would have been much more noticeable in a traditional spelling program? Will the already difficult tasks of identifying primary-grade students in need of early intervention and then providing that intervention become more difficult? If so, will it be harder to remediate the problem at a higher grade level? I believe the answer to all those questions is yes.

If my hypotheses—based on several years' experience in one K-5 elementary school—are correct, these students' writing futures will be difficult. From daily seatwork and homework in elementary school, to long-term reports, to intermediate and high school writing requirements, these students will have problems.

It's true that students with special needs—the ones who meet the mandated guidelines for special assistance—will get that assistance in the resource room. But it's more difficult to teach spelling in the resource room if the resource room teachers and mainstream teachers have opposing ideas about how to do it.

Also, children taught inventive spelling in one school will move to schools where it isn't taught. They'll find it difficult to forget what they were taught before and learn to spell a new way—especially if they don't qualify for special education, but fall into that category of students who need to learn to spell in a systematic and formally presented program. Such children will begin to function (in spelling) as if they're disabled.

Then, as the curriculum becomes more diverse and difficult, classroom teachers will have less and less time to remediate this emerging minority group of non-spellers. And when the non-spellers devolve into non-writers, will they be considered behavior problems? Or just unmotivated? Will they increase the amount of unnecessary special education referrals for evaluation? You can bet your Webster's they will!

Then there are very practical questions: When is the right transition time to formalized spelling? With all the curriculum that needs to be covered, do we really need to teach inventive spelling, then reteach the student to spell correctly? What real benefit does inventive spelling offer?

Those of us who haven't been convinced that inventive spelling is wise are still asking these questions—and waiting for answers.

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